

Habitat III Regional Report for the Arab Region

Mona Serageldin

Maren Larsen

François Vigier

Barbara Summers

Institute for International Urban Development
Cambridge, Massachusetts USA

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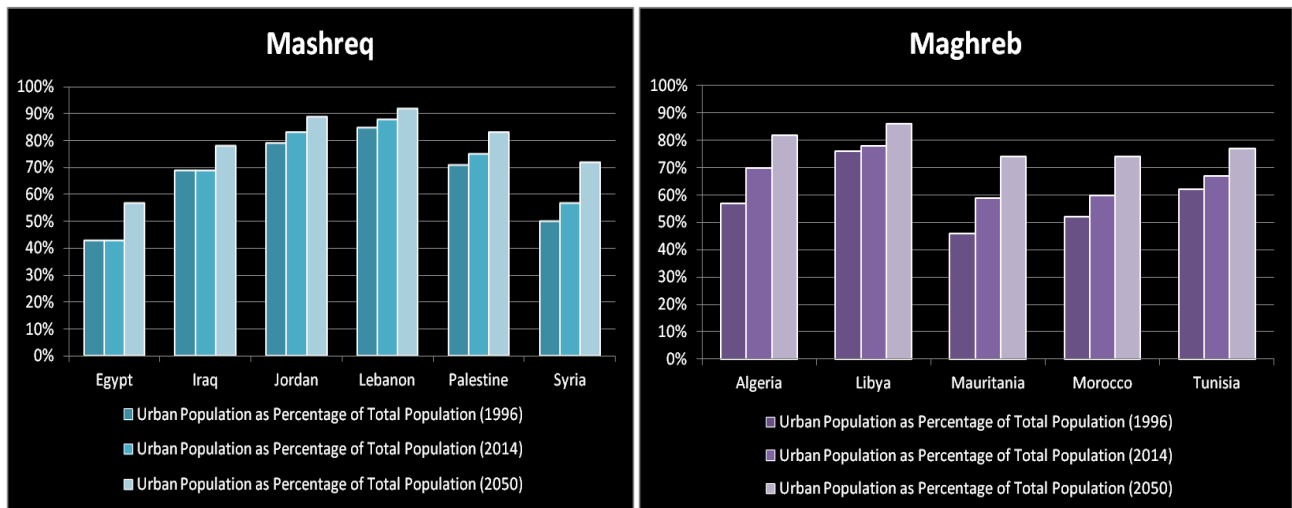
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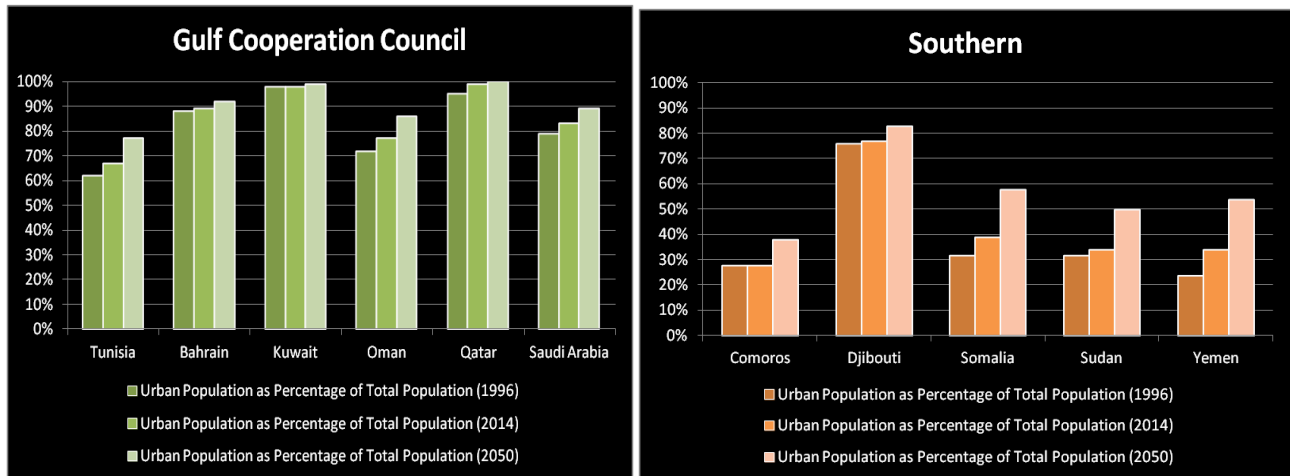
1 Urbanization and Development

1.1 Urban Demography

Since Habitat II in 1996, the majority of countries in the Arab region have witnessed significant increases in the urban population as a proportion of the total population, many of which have dramatically shifted the national human landscape and urban structure of the Arab world. Many countries of the Mashreq have experienced only slight increases in their urban populations, while the urbanization of Maghrebian countries such as Algeria and Mauritania has continued at a rapid pace as a result of continued high birth rates, economic transformations, and environmental changes affecting rural livelihoods. The Gulf Cooperation Council countries were already among the most urbanized countries in the world in 1996. Since the 1990s, however, the demographic composition of the urban population has changed as their need for expatriate workers increased due to large scale urban development projects. With the exception of Djibouti, which functions much like a city-state, the Southern countries are among the least urbanized in the Arab world having recorded modest increases in urban population proportions since 1996, but greater leaps are projected to 2050. By 2050, with the exception of the Comoros, 50% or more of the population in all Arab states will reside in urban areas.

Figure 1: Urban Population as Percentage of Total in each Sub-region (1996, 2014, & 2050)



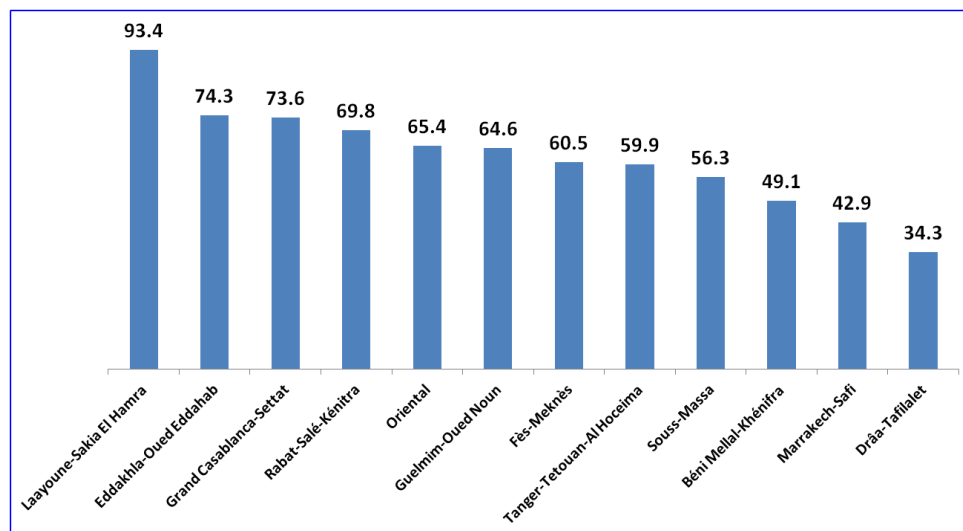


Source: 1996 data from World Bank 2015a; 2014 and 2050 data from UN-DESA 2014; 1996 data for Sudan includes South Sudan.

While the level of urbanization of the countries in the region is relatively high, wide variations exist across different sub-regions and within individual countries due to spatial development policy, geography, vegetation and agricultural practices, cultural traditions, as well as conflict and insecurity. The historical continuity of cities in the Mashreq, inhabited for millennia, inform their primary places in the sub-region’s spatial development policies and urban structures, leading to continued growth in primate capital cities. Amman, Baghdad, Cairo, and Beirut for instance, account for 21%, 27%, 48%, and 55% of the urban populations in their respective countries (World Bank 2015a). Cairo is the largest city in the Arab world and anchors the only mega urban region in the Middle East and North Africa (Cairo-Alexandria corridor).

Cultural and political factors also shape urban landscapes within countries in the region. The most recent census results from Morocco, for instance, revealed that while Laayoune-Sakia El Hamra is 93.4% urbanized, the new region of Draa-Tafilalet is only 34.3% urban (Royaume du Maroc 2014).. The former region is the site of a territorial dispute with Western Sahara, which has led to many investments in the regional capital and has generated many job opportunities in the government, fishing, and mining sectors. The latter region is home to a large Berber or Amazigh population, whose cultural practices include nomadic cattle herding and rural settlement patterns. This internal regional diversity is important to consider in the formulation of national urban development policies, investment planning, and the balanced distribution of development gains across a national territory.

Figure 2: Rate of Urbanization in Morocco by Region in 2014 (percentage)



Source: Royaume du Maroc. 2014.

It is worth mentioning that data collection regarding the demographics of urban areas is not harmonized across the region. The main differences come down to how each country defines an urban area. Many countries use a combination of quantitative information, such as a population threshold, and qualitative information, such as a city's administrative or economic importance in a national context. Quantitative criteria have evolved in many Arab states throughout the decades, such as in Mauritania where the population threshold increased from 5,000 or more inhabitants in 1988 to 10,000 or more in 2000. Some examples of qualitative criteria include: in Algeria, predominance of a non-agricultural economic activity; in Comoros, administrative centers of prefectures; and in Sudan localities of administrative and/or commercial importance.

Figure 3: Definition of "Urban" in National Population Statistics

Quantitative criteria	Qualitative criteria	Combination of quantitative and qualitative criteria
<p>Bahrain (2,500 inhabitants or more); Lebanon (5,000 inhabitants or more); Qatar (5,000 inhabitants or more); Saudi Arabia (5,000 inhabitants or more); Tunisia (5,000 inhabitants or more);</p>	<p>Djibouti (the capital and sedentary populations of specific districts); Egypt (specific and frontier governorates; capitals of governorates; district capitals); Iraq (municipality councils); Libya (Tarabulus and Bangazi and urban parts of other municipalities); Yemen (capitals of 17 governorates and other towns); UAE (nine cities or towns)</p>	<p>Algeria, Comoros, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Palestine, Oman, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic</p>

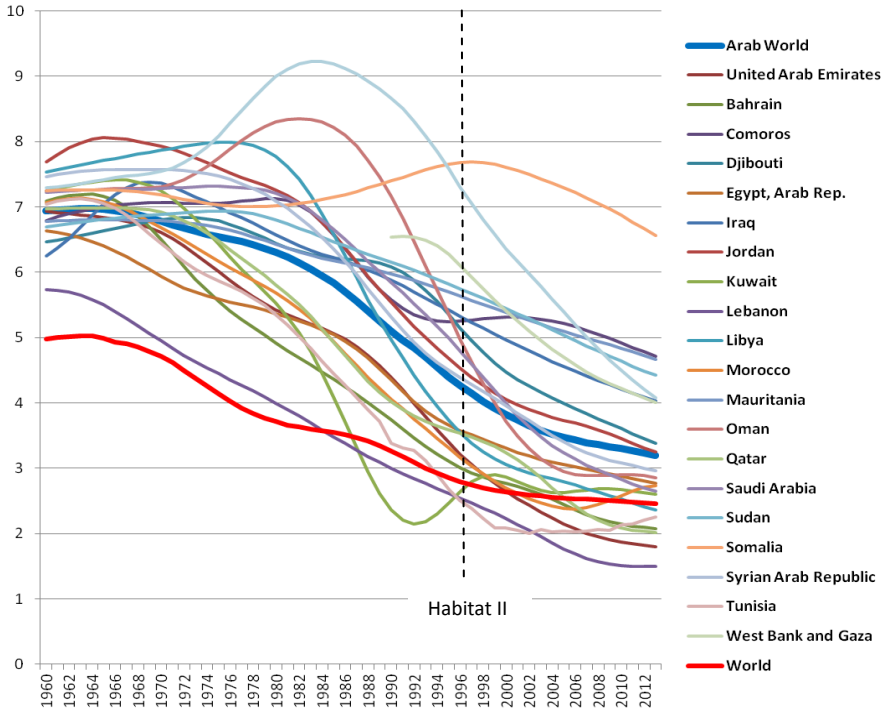
Source: UN-DESA 2014

The issue of data harmonization for better comparison and analysis is not limited to the Arab world, nor is it restricted to the field of urban demographics. The greater disaggregation of data, territorially, by gender, etc., the more opportunities for meaningful analysis and comparison across the region. The ability to implement statistical reform is highly dependent on the institutional context of the statistical bureau and its governance, the resources allocated to it, and the presence of highly qualified staff. Conflict situations complicate statistical agencies' ability to fulfill their mandate and to produce accountable and transparent statistics in post-conflict contexts. Regional intergovernmental organizations offer a unique strategic platform from which to initiate reform towards enhanced data collection, disaggregation, and harmonization of methods in the region.

1.2 Youthfulness

The decline of fertility and birth rates has begun to stabilize since around 2005. Crude birth rates had already started to decline most steeply in the 1970s and 1980s with advances in healthcare, particularly for infants and mothers. While the demographic transition has accompanied development in many Arab states (resulting in lower death rates), fertility rates remain high and are decreasing less dramatically than in previous decades, particularly in the Southern countries and Mauritania. This has led to very youthful age structures in the Arab world where over half of the population in 2011 was under 25 years old (UN-ESCWA 2011).

Figure 4: Fertility rate, total (births per woman) in Arab States



Source: Data from World Bank 2015c

For urbanization of populations to coincide with decreased fertility and a balancing of the age structure, widespread access to education and healthcare in cities will be critical. As more young people flock to cities for educational and employment opportunities, urban policies will need to address the challenge of growing numbers of highly educated, unemployed urban youth in order to leverage the youthfulness of their populations as an asset. This has been a significant challenge in several countries given the magnitude of the youth bulge combined with the persistent struggles of combating poverty and enduring armed conflicts. Unemployment rates are often higher in urban areas and disproportionately affect women. Cultural traditions further constrain the mobility of young female graduates and hence their ability to enter the labor force.

The current situation in North Africa and the Middle East comes after a sustained period of decreasing youth unemployment since 1995. Around 2010 (and coinciding with the turmoil) the situation began to deteriorate and has not been able to recover. Interestingly, youth unemployment rates are actually higher among the middle classes, indicating an urgent necessity to better match the knowledge and skills acquired by youth through education with the demands of a dynamic labor market in the global economy. Failure to create opportunities for young people, as the turmoil of 2011 and the events in its aftermath have shown, risks jeopardizing urban security and national stability.

Many countries in the region have moved beyond viewing urban youth as a vulnerable group or one at risk of exclusion and have drafted independent youth policies and established bodies to better understand and meet their needs, particularly to inform education training and employment policies, in countries directly affected by the events of 2011, such as Tunisia (Youth Policy 2015). Jordan, the first country to develop a national youth policy in the region in 2005, has acknowledged the need to build closer links between the educational and training systems and the labor market, and to understand the specific needs of urban youth in order for them to become meaningful actors and participants in the country's political, economic, social, and cultural development (Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan 2014; 2005). Improving the employability of young people is also a priority for Morocco and ensuring that the educational strategy and accompanying investments for its improvement are consistent with the needs of the labor market is part of Iraq's vision for its urban youth (Republic of Iraq 2014). The needs of urban youth in Saudi Arabia and Sudan are primarily framed and addressed by national ministries and dedicated central government agencies. The services of specialized youth agencies, such as the General Presidency for Youth Welfare in Saudi Arabia, generally concern sport, social, and cultural activities for young people in cities and towns.

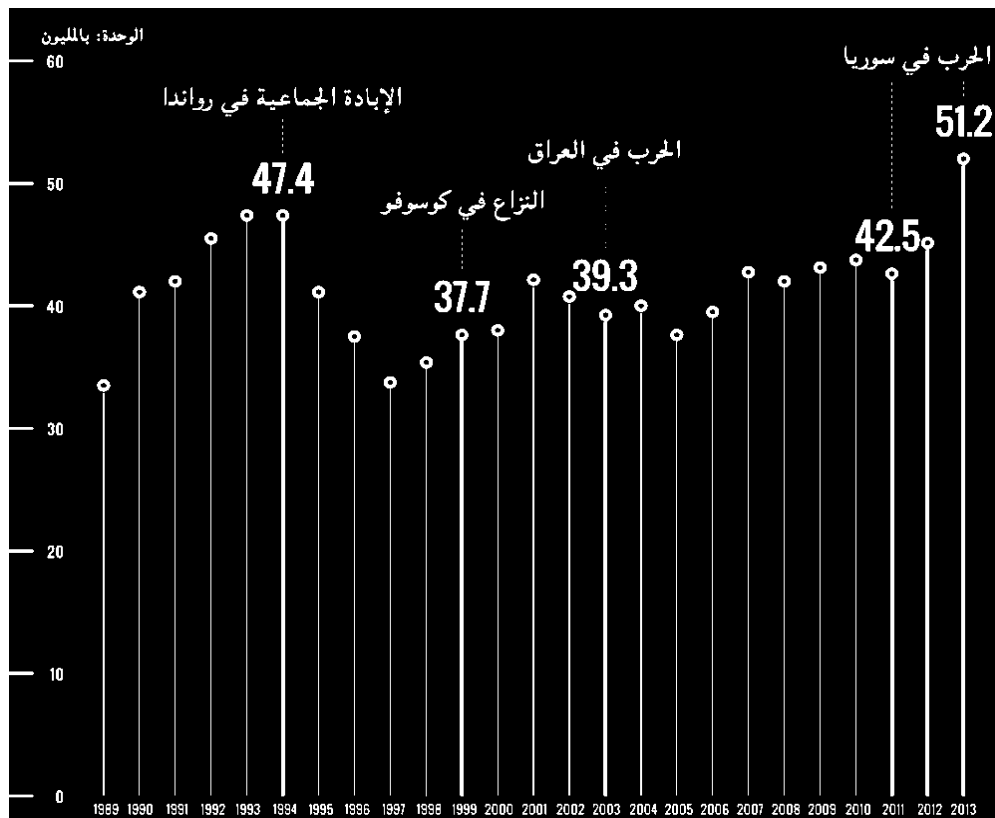
The size and characteristics of the youth cohort in the Arab world has significant implications on national economic policy but also on urban planning and governance policy, particularly in terms of future housing demand. Furthermore, demographic characteristics in countries that have endured prolonged conflicts are already starting to reflect the impacts of the wars on the 18 to 30 age groups, predominantly among the males who were drafted by the army or voluntarily joined militias. Imbalances in the age/sex demographic picture have emerged in both Iraq and Syria.

Violence and displacement have affected the youth who are either inclined to join militias or have to seek wage paying daily labor to support their families as happened to Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The impact on young females forces them to cope with difficult marital situations and/or seek remunerated employment.

1.3 Conflict and Forced Displacement

Since Habitat II in 1996, the Arab region has been the site of numerous armed conflicts, which have generated massive human displacement. By the end of 2013, conflict and turmoil in the region drove the global total of forcibly displaced persons to 51.2 million, breaching 50 million for the first time since WWII, when the UN Refugee Agency was first established (UNHCR 2013). By the end of 2014, displacement totals had reached a global record high, with 59.9 million people characterized as refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), or asylum seekers (UNHCR 2015a). The Syrian crisis has significantly contributed to this growing total in the last few years, bolstered by ongoing conflicts in the Southern countries of Somalia and Sudan, as well as continued instability in Iraq. Changes in climate with an increasing frequency and magnitude of dry seasons have also led to population displacement in the past 20 years and continue to drive rural to urban migration in many countries.

Figure 5: Global Forced Displacement with Key Events in Arabic (1989 - 2013)



Source: UNHCR 2014a

1.3.1 Internally Displaced Persons

By the end of 2014, the number of IDPs in Syria reached 7.6 million, the most of any country. After Colombia, Iraq and Sudan are host to the world's third and fourth largest IDP populations (over 3.2 million and 3.1 million respectively) (UNHCR 2015a). Internal displacement has increasingly become a characteristic of 21st century conflicts and, in turn, has required new mandates and interagency frameworks (several of which have been developed throughout the 1990s and 2000s). The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, presented to the UN Human Rights Committee in 1998, recognizes the rights of IDPs. While some IDPs seek refuge in camps or collective centers (often managed by international humanitarian organizations), an increasing number are settling in cities, where it is difficult to differentiate them from the local urban poor (IDMC 2015).

In Syria as of October 2014, Aleppo governorate hosted the largest IDP population of any governorate (nearly 2 million). The capital, Damascus, hosted another 400,000 (IDMC 2014). In Iraq, estimates put the total number of IDPs close to 4 million as of June 2015, many of whom have fled to urban centers such as Baghdad or Erbil in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. In Anbar province, the majority of IDPs are displaced within the province and flee to cities such as Fallujah and Ramadi, the two fastest growing urban centers in the country. In Sudan, it was estimated in 2008 that between 18% and 23% of the urban population of Khartoum were IDPs, not including those living in camps (Jacobsen, 2008).

Before the turmoil in Syria, Aleppo was home to approximately 25% of the Syrian population and was a popular destination for rural migrants. When turmoil broke out in the city in 2012, over half of the city's residents were forcibly displaced to other parts of the country or other parts of the city. Service provision in many urban areas in the country has been taken over by various humanitarian actors. Charities, NGOs, and several international organizations are delivering health services, while mosques and private households are filling gaps in education and neighborhood committees have organized waste collection (UN-Habitat 2014). Housing options preferred and pursued by the displaced include host situations with relatives and friends or renting from host families. The situation in Syria has led to severe strains in the housing markets of many Syrian cities and neighboring country host cities. In the coastal city of Lattakia, as many as 82% of IDPs rent (Ibid.).

The number of internally displaced persons globally has grown every year since 2010, and has more than doubled since then, in large part driven by the onset of the Syrian crisis. Solutions for IDPs differ from those for refugees in a given country namely because IDPs are citizens of the country in which they have been displaced. This poses significant challenges in countries in which national and/or local governance and provision or financing of services are compromised by turmoil. Some countries, nonetheless, have managed to form policies around managing internal displacement. Iraq developed a national policy on displacement in 2008 and seeks to widen land tenure options in order to facilitate IDPs access to land and housing when lasting

shelter solutions can be realized (Republic of Iraq 2014). Yemen was the second country in the Middle East to adopt such a policy in June 2013, whose main accomplishment was the establishment of a legal framework promoting the primacy of volunteerism regarding integration, resettlement, or return. According to UNHCR, whose mandate has increasingly included interventions, in partnership with central governments, to protect and support IDPs, 12 out of 21 governorates in Yemen now host IDPs, the vast majority of whom do not live in camps, but rather with host families, in rented rooms, or in informal settlements (UNHCR 2015).

The situation of displaced populations in the region is dynamic and is correlated to the evolution of the various conflicts causing such displacement. New urban policy considerations that do not take into account the OCHA Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the IASC's Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons risk overlooking or excluding the needs of the displaced in terms of their access to shelter and livelihoods and jeopardizing national and regional stability. Today, the question of durable solutions for IDPs primarily comes down to ensuring long-term safety and security. In addition to a rights-based approach and a legal framework that protects such IDP rights, capacity and resources for local and central governments are a critical component of durable solutions to ensure sustainable IDP access to land and services.

1.3.2 Refugees

Conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Sudan, and Somalia, and the occupation of Palestine have also contributed to a protracted refugee crisis, the impacts of which are being felt globally. Syria became the largest country of origin for refugees worldwide in 2014. Syrian refugees have primarily sought safety, shelter, and services in the cities of neighboring countries, namely Turkey (2.18 million), Lebanon (1.08 million), and Jordan (630,000), with a decreasing proportion of refugees fleeing to or staying in camps. As of the end of 2014, Lebanon and Jordan were among the top ten refugee receiving countries in the world and hosted the highest and second highest number of refugees per 1,000 inhabitants, respectively (UNHCR 2015a). Other Arab states hosting some Syrian Refugees include Iraq (245,000), Egypt (128,000), and North Africa (26,700) (UNHCR 2015b). Contrasting with the suddenness of displacement in Syria, Palestine is the country of origin for the world's largest and longest refugee crisis. In 1995, 2.8 million displaced Palestinians were registered with UNRWA, a figure that today stands at 5.1 million (UNHCR 1995; UNHCR 2015a). The return of refugees to Palestinian cities has declined since the last decade of the 20th century, due in large part to continued incursions and uprisings (Palestinian National Authority 2010).

The rapid growth in the number of refugees originating from Syria in the past four years has often overwhelmed local and international asylum systems, making a durable shelter solution for refugee households an increasingly long and often difficult process. The nature of the conflict compounds the difficulty of the current refugee situation, as voluntary return of refugees from Syria hinges on the ability to restore peace and security in the war-torn country. Since 1995,

global refugee returns have hit an all-time low, with only 100,000 refugees returning to their countries of origin in 2014, including nearly 11,000 to Iraq and a little more than 13,000 to Sudan (UNHCR 2015). The changing nature of conflicts in the region and the emergence of transnational terrorist organizations has seriously jeopardized the ability of refugees from both Iraq and Syria to return.

Local authorities are a critical stakeholder in dealing with refugee populations, an increasing proportion of which are no longer seeking refuge in shelters but are living in urban settings (59% of refugees globally and over half of global IDPs)(Crawford et.al. 2015). In Jordan, approximately 85% of Syrian refugees are living in non-camp settings, primarily in the northern governorates. Over 50% of refugees have settled in Amman and Irbid governorates with another 20% in Mafraq and Zarqa (Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan 2015). One of the key issues facing Syrian refugees include gaps between the income that their limited economic activities have been able to generate and the cost of living, such as high food prices and increasing rents. In Mafraq governorate, one study has revealed that 86 per cent of Syrian refugees lived in a house or apartment with an average cost of JOD 136 (USD 190) for urban accommodation (UNICEF, UNHCR, and REACH 2013). The vulnerability of refugee households is exacerbated by short-term, insecure rental contracts. Jordan's national housing sector response strategy emphasizes interventions that strengthen how the urban housing sector can meet the basic needs of both refugees, as well as local populations by bringing unfinished or dilapidated housing units into the market in partnership with the local private sector through support to Jordanian developers, banks, and enhanced household credit capacity.

In addition to the pressures on the housing sector, the rapid onset of the crisis and the ensuing population shocks to cities in neighboring countries have, in many cases, outstripped local authorities' ability to effectively manage urban services and city growth. Urban densification, water scarcity, and spontaneous land settlement patterns have negatively impacted living conditions and the environment. The Government of Lebanon estimates that over one million Syrian Refugees are primarily being hosted, renting accommodation, or residing in informal settlements across 1,000 municipalities, where directly impacted host communities account for approximately 25% of the Lebanese population. By the end of 2014, it was estimated that 55% of refugees lived in sub-standard shelter or informal settlements (Government of Lebanon and the United Nations 2014).

In both Jordan and Lebanon, the urban poor in host communities are often negatively impacted by refugees willingness to accept cheaper wages and increased rents generated by their demand for housing. On the other hand, businesses and property owners benefit from the demand for jobs and rental housing of urban refugees. The increasing income disparities generated by such a crisis can have long-lasting implications on host cities and affect their ability to recover from such a shock. Furthermore, water, sanitation, and power network improvements and extensions in many Lebanese host cities have not been able to keep up with the peri-urban growth of informal settlements, fueled by refugee arrivals. The financial strain on local authorities and their

lack of administrative capacity to act on refugee issues in the host countries constrain their ability to respond to refugee and local community demands for improved quality and coverage of services.

Efforts to mitigate involuntary migration and enable the safe return of displaced populations, particularly through the involvement of international security organizations in the wake of the conflicts of the mid-1990s has achieved some success in South Eastern Europe but has done little to avoid an intensification of conflict in North Africa and the Middle East over the past few decades. The emergence of human displacement in the region has socio-political and economic antecedents, particularly brought to light by the events of 2011 that require broader stakeholder involvement than security organizations and financial institutions, as called for in the UNHCR's 1995 State of the World's Refugees Report.

Today, the numbers of the displaced continue to rise and refugees travel increasingly long distances seeking safety and opportunities to rebuild their livelihoods. The nature and magnitude of the crisis and the increasing role of cities in the region as hosts for forcibly displaced persons presents new challenges that require new, and often transnational solutions. Regional cooperation, namely through the Syria Regional Response Plan (RPP) (the first of which was released in March of 2012), has emerged as a necessary coordinating framework for governments and the humanitarian sector to provide humanitarian assistance during the Syrian conflict and enhance the resiliency of affected areas. As governments and humanitarian and UN agencies work to cope with the urbanization of displacement and think beyond camps as temporary shelter solutions, inter-agency and multi-stakeholder coordination will be necessary to ensure that humanitarian response aligns with local urban development objectives. New modalities of assistance and partnership have emerged, such as cash transfer programs and area based approaches that incorporate the inputs of host communities themselves. The 2014 Regional Response Plan (RPP6) was the first to incorporate support for local authorities through institutional capacity building (UNHCR 2014b). Furthermore, national authorities who control municipal budgets should provide municipalities with funds commensurate with the challenges they face and clear policy guidance to enable them to act.

As the search for peace in the region continues and solutions to the negative human impacts of wars and protracted conflicts are developed by Arab states, a renewed commitment to the principles of protection and humanitarian assistance is needed to increase regional and global solidarity in the management of forced displacement. The pressures that protracted displacement and refugee situations place on urban service provision need to be seriously considered as the humanitarian sector coordinates its response with local authorities and host community participation. The first World Humanitarian Summit, which will be held in May 2016 can be a useful platform to generate workable solutions and cooperation mechanisms in line with the New Urban Agenda that considers sustainable solutions for the displaced. Urban stakeholders, sectoral ministries dealing with urban affairs, local authorities, and urban-based civil society

organizations will be vital in localizing humanitarian response and preparedness in managing increasingly urban refugee crises.

1.4 Urban Migration and Remittances

Rural to urban migration has been a major driver urbanization in the Middle East and North Africa, with urban populations of the region growing four-fold between 1970 and 2010. The Habitat Agenda that emerged 20 years ago advocated for policies that would lessen the pressures of urbanization by stemming rural to urban migration, such as increasing investment and programming in basic service provision in rural zones. Many programs have been implemented but have rarely proven to affect migration, and no such program in the Arab states has effectively stymied the rapid rates of urbanization. Sudan presents a good illustration of this situation. As a result, several international organizations are focusing on making migration processes more efficient and enabling the poor to access the advantages that urban areas can bring, particularly socio-economically (United Nations 2014). There is growing recognition that rural development policies need to be promoted in their own right while mutually reinforcing urban and regional policies that can eventually orient population flows towards strategic nodes and new growth poles along development corridors.

Rural to urban migration to Arab cities has been driven by several push and pull factors. Economic development through investments in city-based industries and sectors and the livelihood opportunities they offer attract rural migrants, while endemic water shortages and droughts, along with the modernization of the agriculture sector, push many rural residents to abandon their agriculture-based livelihoods. As urban-rural disparities persist, families and individuals seeking greater access to income-earning work, better services, and a greater quality of life continue to flow to large and medium sized cities in each sub-region.

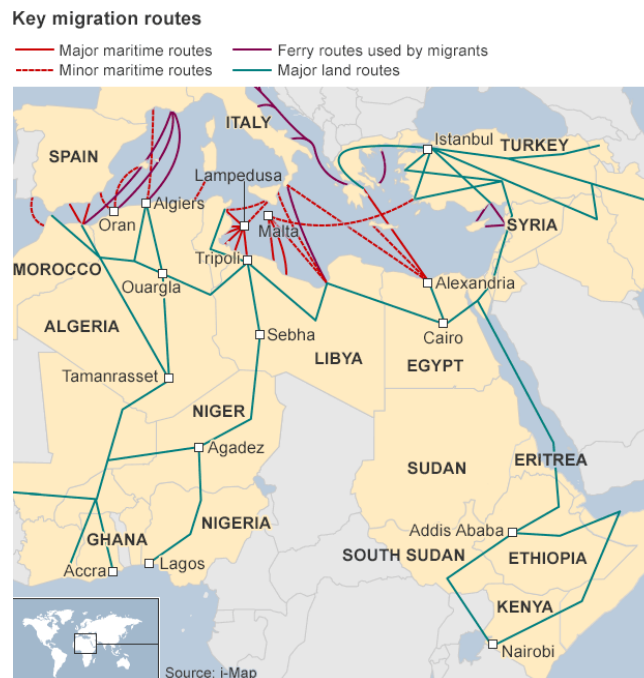
Mashreq countries are primarily migrant sending countries with skilled and un-skilled rural and urban workers emigrating to the Gulf States or abroad. Migration patterns in and out of the region have been severely disrupted by the turmoil and forced displacement. Prior to the turmoil, Syria was a predominantly migrant-receiving country, hosting significant numbers of Iraqi and Palestinian refugees, as well as other migrants from Arab states, accounting for 86.5% of all foreign nationals in the country as of 2004 (Syrian Arab Republic Office of the Prime Minister).

In the Maghreb, cities in the oil-producing countries of Libya and Algeria were key destinations for Egyptians, Lebanese, and other regional migrants attracted by the job opportunities created by oil revenue. In the case of Libya, African migrants settled more or less permanently in the country facilitated by the Qaddafi regime's pan-African policy. The war in Libya reversed such a pattern with migrants fleeing to neighboring countries, taking the option of the dangerous crossing by boat to Italy, or returning home. Morocco and Tunisia, on the other hand, are predominantly migrant sending countries, with most emigrants settling in Europe due to a lack of

job opportunities matching the skills and ambitions of the large urban youth populations at home. Between 2000 and 2013, the global stock of migrants from the Maghreb grew from approximately 3.6 million to 5.5 million (UN-DESA 2013).

One of the most striking migration transformations in the Maghreb affecting urban development is the influx of sub-Saharan African migrants using urban areas of Morocco as transit cities through which to emigrate, often clandestinely, to Europe. The magnitude of illegal migrant flows through the Morocco-Spain corridor has increased through the late 2000s and Spanish authorities increased control of the land and sea crossings have led to increasing numbers of sub-Saharan Africans settling in Moroccan cities, with large concentrations in Rabat. The situation led Morocco to be the first Arab country with an immigration policy adopted in 2013 that included regularization of certain categories of migrants (Ministère chargé des Marocains Résidant à l'Étranger et des Affaires de la Migration 2015). Several institutions are working to decrease the marginalization of sub-Saharan African migrants, through discrimination and negative perceptions by host communities are still barriers to further integration.

Figure 6: Key Migration Routes in the Region



Source: BBC News 2015

The ability of GCC countries to achieve their large scale urban development projects is largely dependent on expatriate workers, who are attracted to opportunities to rapidly accumulate savings that can be invested in asset building in countries of origin, including a large proportion of migrants from Mashreq countries. As of mid-2013, the Gulf states hosted 2.4 million Egyptians and another half million workers from Palestine, Jordan, and Syria. The majority of low-skilled expatriate laborers, however, come from Asian countries (primarily the Indian sub-

continent) through sponsorship systems known as *kafala*. These systems, which place the legal responsibility and provision of housing and services for expatriate workers on employers, have come under criticism for perpetuating poor living and working conditions. Certain reforms in recent years have sought to grant greater rights and benefits to these laborers. For instance, legislation in Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates has enhanced labor mobility for expatriate laborers in the country since 2009 and 2005 respectively and Kuwait passed legislation to protect the rights of domestic workers in 2015 (Zahra 2015).

In the smaller Gulf states, non-nationals constitute a majority of the population, as shown in the table below (European University Institute (EUI) and Gulf Research Center (GRC), 2015). The last two decades have seen a significant increase in bi-lateral agreements between labor sending and receiving countries, particularly agreements with Asian governments to coordinate recruitment, labor management, the protection of the rights of temporary expatriate laborers, and additional protocols that primarily address conditions for repatriation.

Figure 7: Expatriate Laborers and Bilateral Agreements with Countries of Origin

Country	Non-nationals as a percent of total population (latest year available)	Bilateral Agreements on Labour Movement with Countries of Origin and Date of First Agreement
Bahrain	52%	Nepal (2008)
Kuwait	69%	Egypt (1997); Philippines (1997); India (2007)
Oman	44%	India (2008)
Qatar	86%	Morocco (1981); Tunisia (1981); Sudan (1981); Somalia (1983); India (1986); Bangladesh (1988); Iran (1991); Pakistan (1992); Nepal (2005); China (2008); Turkey (2009); Gambia (2010); Macedonia (2014)
Saudi Arabia		Philippines (2013); India (2014)
United Arab Emirates	89%	Nepal (2007)

Labor migration policies have important implications for the development of inclusive cities that ensure access to decent living conditions for all and urban development that promotes social cohesion. The labor demanded by large scale urban development also requires national and international policies to efficiently manage labor movement in ways that maximize benefits to host countries and countries of origin.

In 2006, the League of Arab States approved the Arab Declaration on International Migration in an effort to facilitate mobility and ensure mutual benefits among Arab states and countries of origin and promote Arab development and regional integration. The 2013 Declaration of International Migration in the Arab Region reinforced collaborative approaches to managing

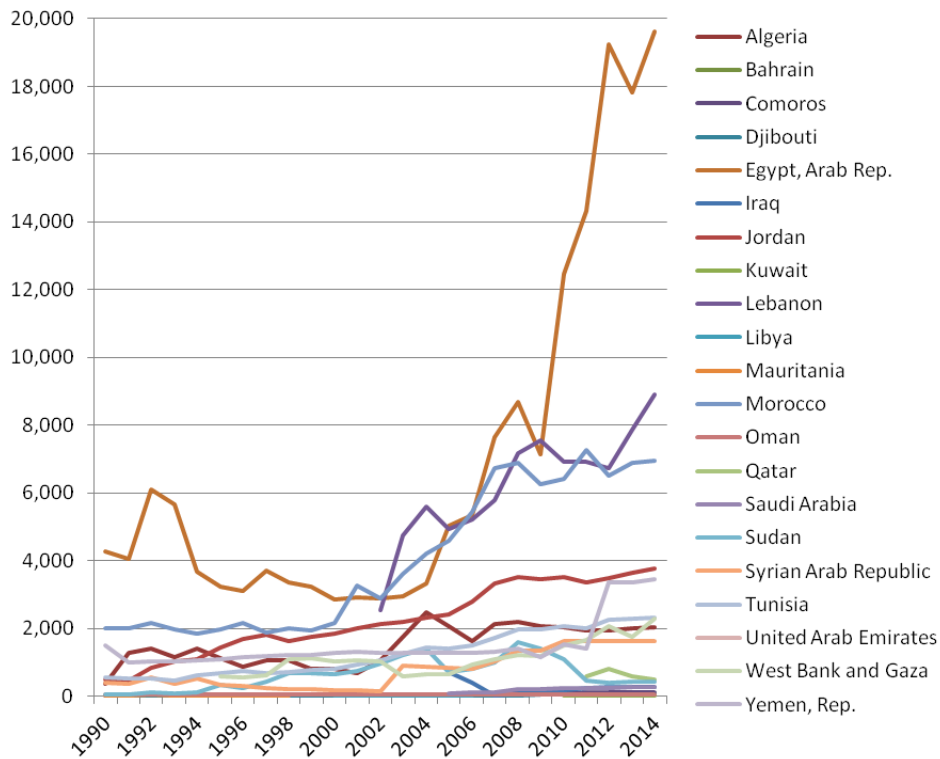
expatriate labor, particularly in the Gulf countries. The United Arab Emirates participated in a pilot project emerging from the dialogue to work with select Asian governments to increase the efficiency of temporary work contracting processes and improving the working and living conditions of expatriate laborers.

In the Southern countries, population movements have intensified at various points in the aftermath or perpetuation of civil wars in Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. Population transfers in Sudan occurred primarily between the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the secession of South Sudan. The year before independence, 300,000 people moved from South Sudan to Sudan (UN-DESA 2013). Approximately 3 million people moved to South Sudan between 2005 and 2013 (Kimenyi 2012). These population movements and the urban primacy of Greater Khartoum has led to economic migration to the capital in search of job opportunities, better services, and relatively better quality of life. All Southern countries have experienced net out-migration since the mid-1990s, though in the last five years, net migration in Djibouti and Somalia has increased. Cities in Yemen are primarily used as transit points for international migrants from the African continent. Migrants in these countries often settle in cities, placing increased demand and pressure on local authorities struggling to provide basic services and working to manage informal urbanization processes. The ongoing conflict, which erupted in late 2014, has altered the situation by causing internal displacement and disrupting migrant transit routes.

1.4.1 Remittances

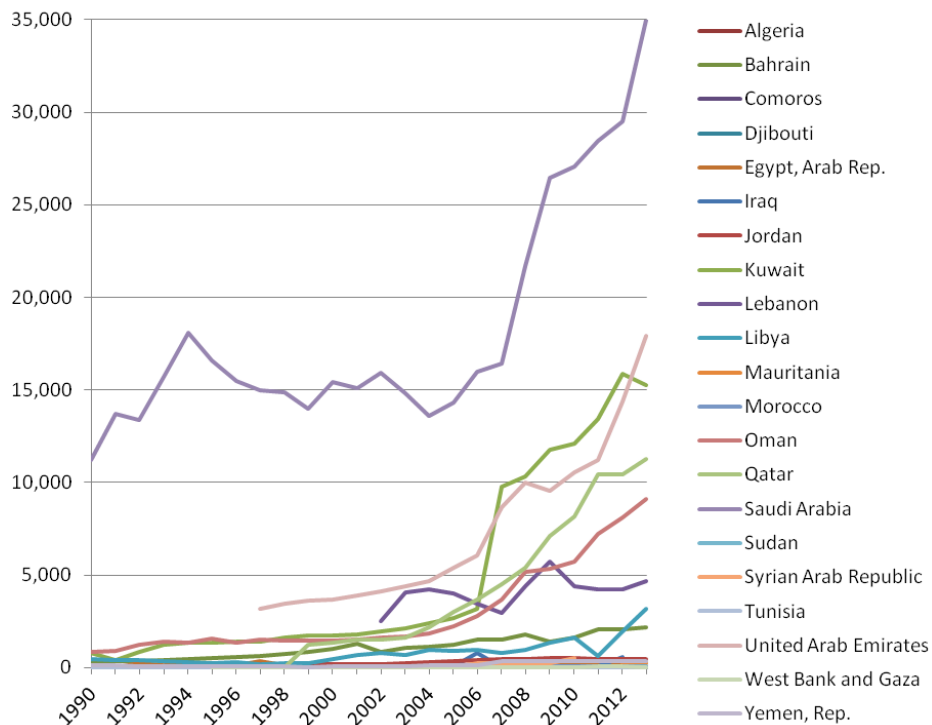
Approximately 9% of global remittances flow to Arab states; 17% flows from Arab states to migrants' countries of origin across the world (World Bank 2015). Most remittance outflows come from the Gulf due to the high number of expatriate laborers there under sponsorship systems.

Figure 8: Migrant Remittance Inflows (in USD millions)



Source: World Bank 2015d; No data for the U.A.E. or Somalia; 2014 figures are an estimate.

Figure 9: Migrant Remittance Outflows (in USD millions)



Source: World Bank 2015d; No data for Somalia.

Egypt receives the largest absolute value of remittances in the region and is the sixth largest recipient in the world. Greater Cairo is the hub for remittance investments, particularly in land and housing, which continues to appreciate rapidly in different parts of the metropolis. In terms of the contribution of remittances to GDP, the most recent information dates to 2013 and is therefore distorted by the effects of the 2011 turmoil in the Mashreq countries. Comoros is most dependent on remittances, which made up nearly 20% of the GDP in 2013. Other countries whose remittance receipts contribute to GDP by over 5% include Lebanon (17.7%), Jordan (10.8%), Yemen (9.3%), Egypt (6.6%), and Morocco (6.6%) (World Bank 2015d)¹. Remittance outflows from Arab states come overwhelmingly from Gulf States, led largely by Saudi Arabia, and followed by the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, and Oman.

Remittances play a significant role in national development in the Arab states, often surpassing the value of official development assistance (ODA) several times over. Remittances are a key element in the economic strategies of receiving households, many of which rely on this income source to meet basic needs and build assets. Savings are invested in land acquisition, housing, and subsequent incremental improvements and funds to start a commercial activity.

In the Mashreq, the Lebanese diaspora is estimated to be at least three times larger than the resident population. However, outreach and platforms to engage with the diaspora and leverage remittances for urban development have primarily been pursued by businesses, social charitable organizations, and international networks. Government engagement with the diaspora and efforts to tap into remittances remains limited and concentrated on knowledge transfer in different sectors, such as telecommunications. Regional initiatives have also emerged, such as the First Conference of Arab Expatriates organized by the League of Arab States. Home town associations are generally leveraged in the Maghreb, particularly Morocco and Algeria with international donor support to link expatriates with their villages of origin.

In migrant sending countries, legal frameworks, ministries, and central government agencies have been established to coordinate migration affairs and reach out to the diaspora to leverage tap into investment and knowledge capital abroad for national and urban development projects. This sectoral response highlights a need for further integration of migrant policies into national development policies. Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia have been leaders in establishing legal rights for their migrants abroad and mobilizing remittances for capital investment in the cities. The Egypt Fund, established in Egypt in 2013, and the Moroccan MaghriBank, also established in 2013, are examples of ways in which countries to engage nationals living abroad to strengthen financial connections to the region.

¹ Data for remittances as a share of GDP in 2013 is unavailable for Bahrain, Libya, Mauritania, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, and Palestine.

1.5 Land and Housing

The Arab region shares a common history of tenure systems, property transactions, registration and titling laws. Escalating land values and rapid appreciation of buildings since the mid 1970s have led to today's segmented land market and affect all aspects of urban policy.

While political and business elites have managed to control large tracks of the most valuable and strategically located land since the 1990s, informal construction by middle-income groups squeezed out of the formal land markets by high land values have fueled the spread of unplanned urbanization financed mostly through remittances in migrant sending countries: Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and Syria. Rapid appreciation of land values has sustained widespread speculation in both the formal and informal markets.

Registration of property transactions in the region are the second most cumbersome and expensive in the world after sub-Saharan Africa taking on average 36 days at a cost estimated at 5.7% of the property value (World Bank 2009 and 2010). Given the additional need to deal with the complex primary and derivative rights to real property and find all the heirs and holders of rights it is not surprising that a large portion of properties in all countries in the region remain unregistered and that successive transactions of unregistered titles create unclear ownership situations and generate frequent disputes and litigation. Land regularization can therefore take upward of ten years which hampers urban upgrading projects. In all cases where cities are expanding on privately owned land, land related issues have become a major impediment to implementation of public projects. In post-revolution Tunisia a corrective measure for past abuses by acquisitive elites, stipulated their land can no longer be expropriated for a public purpose until both the local authorities and all the holders of rights to the property have agreed upon an appraised value. This process hinders urban development and will need to be amended.

Despite all the countries' efforts to reform their mortgage markets a major problem in seeking financing for property purchases is that banks do not accept unregistered land as collateral, thereby limiting access to credit for lower and middle-income households seeking to build up their assets. Microfinance institutions may be able to partly fill the gap providing home improvement funds and bridge financing for housing construction.

The modalities of housing provision and access to land in Arab states have changed significantly in the last twenty years, but have been disrupted in countries that have experienced turmoil and instability since 2011. Given the age structure of the population, rates of household formation, and continued rural to urban migration, all countries in the region suffer from a shortage of affordable housing. The high price of urban land, its rapid appreciation, and its limited supply in dense urban settlements is fundamental to many of the urban development challenges facing Arab cities today.

Formal land and housing markets have been encumbered by obsolete subdivision regulations, rent regulations, and tenant protection laws, as well as lengthy and unnecessarily complicated

and costly registration and title issuing procedures. Most major cities in the region have introduced the digitization of records, electronic data processing, and information management systems in land administration to alleviate some of these challenges. Cairo, Alexandria and Tunis, among other cities, have further created internet portals and one-stop counters to facilitate land purchases by investors and citizens, including the diaspora. Egypt's particularly costly and cumbersome processes to register a piece of land have been improved with the registration fee reduced from 12% of the property's value to a flat rate of 2,000 LE (UN-Habitat 2012).

Recent and ongoing conflicts have severe implications on formal registration of land and property. During the Lebanese Civil War property registration records were destroyed, particularly in the south making the digitization and updating of property records a priority for the country's economic and urban development. Countries experiencing ongoing conflict have to cope with out of date or ill maintained records, which could be exacerbated by the massive displacement these conflicts are causing.

In both stable and post-conflict countries, governments are struggling to keep pace with urbanisation trends by opening up of new development areas and the construction of affordable housing. Due to high urban land prices, young families are priced out of many housing markets forcing them to live with their families or in crowded neighbourhoods where the housing prices are lower. The top 20% of income earners in North Africa fuel rapidly increasing land prices by purchasing land, villas, or high-end apartments in elite neighbourhoods or new suburban districts. This trend has affected Cairo, Alexandria, Rabat, Marrakech, and around the Lake of Tunis.

The second 20% of income earners require access to housing finance at below market interest rates. These rates are often reserved for cooperatives and other groups that are willing or able to build and develop their own housing on allocated state-owned land, prioritized for such groups by the government. Households, in practice, form cooperatives to gain access to land rather than housing finance and the land acquired is often subdivided among cooperative members, which represents a rift with traditional principles of cooperatives. Countries with relatively stable investment climates, such as Egypt and Morocco have had success attracting private investors to develop affordable housing on state-owned land granted at a subsidized price. Egypt sells building plots on the open market in the New Towns and uses the proceeds to finance extending infrastructure to the new areas. Southern countries, on the other hand, have largely been unable to build the amount of affordable housing needed or establish conditions that would enable private sector participation in the sector.

New Towns have proliferated across the region throughout the 2000s, developed by public and para-public agencies to alleviate some of the pressures of urbanization on the city centers and meet the increasing demand for housing. Their development is also changing the spatial distribution of urban land and creating rapidly appreciating land markets in and around the newly developed sites, particularly when they are aligned with large infrastructure projects and when

service provision is able to keep pace with property development in order to speed up population build up on the site and reach thresholds able to support commercial development. In urban extension zones, new development areas and new towns in the Greater Cairo Region prices have doubled every two and three years.

Four new towns are at various stages of construction by Al Omrane and include Tamansourt near Marrakech, Tamesna near Rabat-Salé, Sahel-Lakhiayta near Casablanca, and Chafrate near Tangiers (Al Omrane 2013). Development in the new towns in Greater Cairo has been accelerating; from 2001 to 2008 they averaged 27.9% growth. Over 50% of the development currently taking place in the new towns is concentrated in New Cairo and the 6th of October/Sheikh Zayed twin cities located along the same east-west axis, underscoring the importance of integrating new planned settlements into larger regional development corridors (GOPP 2012). The highest priced land and housing is in New Cairo, which has been developed by Egypt's largest private real estate corporation. Between 2004 and 2005, land prices in New Cairo quadrupled from LE 1,000 to LE 4,000 per square meter (Serageldin et. al. 2010).

Urban conditions in some countries, such as in post-war Lebanon, have further segmented the land and housing markets. The legislative, social, and cultural environment is conducive to fragmentation and the quest for security and improved service provision promotes physical segregation between the groups that can afford accommodations in gated communities and the services they provide and those that cannot, thereby widening the socio-economic disparities. The Lebanese housing stock has shifted dramatically towards gated communities, with their proportion growing from 1% of the market in 2000 to 10% of the market in 2010 (UN-Habitat 2012).

1.6 Informal Settlements

The informal housing sector has consistently filled the gaps left by the private sector, whose housing production has primarily focused on meeting the demand ranging from luxury to upper middle-income housing. Informal housing is characterized in the region by two very different patterns: 1) sub-standard or makeshift structures in central slums, hazardous, and unsafe locations or peri-urban areas lacking access to basic services and 2) unplanned urban expansion mostly through the subdivision of agricultural land in violation of existing codes. This latter typology is characterized by solid construction in concrete and brick and a rectilinear layout emanating from the shape of fields and anticipating future infrastructure servicing by local authorities. Small scale developers, real estate brokers, lawyers, and accountants operate in these settlements where land and property transactions are mostly through private sales documents that are rarely registered. Informal finance mechanisms are also used for both land acquisition and housing construction. In Palestine for instance, it is estimated that over 80% of all financial

transactions dealing with housing are cash-based and go unreported except through private contracts (State of Palestine 2014).

Figure 10: Slum population as a percentage of urban population for select Arab States (1990 – 2014)

Country	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007	2009	2014
Comoros	65.4%	65.4%	68.9%	68.9%	68.9%	68.9%	69.6%
Egypt	50.2%	39.2%	28.1%	17.1%	14.4%	13.1%	10.6%
Iraq	16.9%	16.9%	16.9%	52.8%	52.8%	52.8%	47.2%
Jordan				15.8%	17.7%	19.6%	12.9%
Lebanon				53.1%			
Mauritania							79.9%
Morocco	37.4%	35.2%	24.2%	13.1%	13.1%	13.1%	13.1%
Saudi Arabia				18.0%			
Somalia				73.5%	73.6%	73.6%	73.6%
Sudan							91.6%
Syrian Arab Republic				10.5%	22.5%		19.3%
Tunisia							8.0%
Yemen				67.2%	76.8%		60.8%

Source: United Nations Statistics Division 2015 (data for all available Arab states)

The proliferation of slums and informal settlements has been a continued challenge in the Arab region, perpetuated by the high price of land, population movements and displacement, limited access to credit, cumbersome land transaction and tenure registration procedures, and financial constraints on public management of land development. Southern countries have the highest proportion of their urban populations living in slums, with 60.8% in Yemen, 69.6% in the Comoros, 73.6% in Somalia, and 91.6% in Sudan as of 2014. Mauritania is the only country outside of the Southern countries with over half of the urban population living in slums (79.9%) (United Nations Statistics Division 2015). Several governments, however, have tackled these persistent challenges in the last two decades with targeted policies, programs, and implementation mechanisms to improve the urban environment in lower income communities and to expand affordable housing development. Most countries have prioritized the construction of affordable housing in their urban policies and programs, though challenges persist for public and private provision in terms of availability and affordability of urban land and access to housing finance for developers and potential homeowners (UN-Habitat 2012).

The presence of Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon has placed extraordinary demand on already limited affordable housing stocks. In Jordan the average annual shortfall of 3,400 housing units has been compounded by the need for an additional 120,000 housing units to accommodate Syrian refugees. Assistance in local community settings has focused on upgrading housing units, completing unfinished buildings, providing harsh weather kits and conditional cash-for-rent programs in various cities including Irbid, Jerash, Mafraq, Zarqa, Ajlun, Al Balqa, Amman, Tafileh, Karak and Madaba. The shock of the Syrian refugee crisis has catalyzed the

need for institutional reforms, such as a review and revision of the National Housing Policy and the revitalization of the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDC). (Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan 2015).

In Syria, large proportions of the population in certain governorates lived in informal settlements before the turmoil. 85% of the population in Hasakeh lived in slums, 59% in Homs, and 74% in Raqqa. Smaller proportions lived in informal areas in the economic centers of Aleppo and Damascus (17% and 15% respectively). In terms of their share of urban land, 18% of the Aleppo's total area consisted of informal settlements, concentrated primarily in the northeast around the Sheikh Najjar industrial zone (Ali 2005). All countries that have experienced turmoil since 2011 have witnessed an increase in informal settlements due to the breakdown of enforcement efforts by overwhelmed local authorities and the stalling of formal investment in urban projects.

Jordan joins Palestine and Egypt in addressing affordable housing provision through specific urban policies and the creation of dedicated central agencies. The not-for-profit, primarily donor funded Palestinian Housing Council has made significant contributions to the rehabilitation, reconstruction, and provision of housing units and apartments in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem since its creation in 1991, earning it the Dubai International Award for Best Practices in 2008 (State of Palestine 2014).

Egypt's Informal Settlements Development Facility (ISDF) established in 2009 is mandated with financing local authority's projects to upgrade informal settlements by extending credit to local governments to finance investments in these areas. ISDF's survey of informal settlements and classification of sites led to a clear action plan, whose implementation has affected nearly 1 million urban residents. In addition to re-blocking and in-situ upgrading, ISDF has advocated for land allocations and social housing units in New Towns for relocation. ISDF still faces challenges to remain financially sustainable and to develop a manageable legal framework for complex land transactions. Addressing informal settlements in conflict situations is limited by political instability and security concerns. However, Iraq has embarked on formulating policies to address the challenge in the larger cities.

In the Arab world's responses to informal urbanization, the experiences of Morocco and Tunisia stand out for the efficiency of their national programs to upgrade and provide affordable housing in an effort to decrease the urban population living in slums. In Morocco, between 1995 and 2014, the proportion of the urban population living in slums decreased from 35% to 13%, due in large part to the ability to engage the private sector and increased access to credit for low-income households (United Nations Statistics Division 2015).

Morocco's experience dealing with rapid urbanization and the resultant expansion of informal settlements transformed 52 of 85 targeted cities into cities without slums as of early 2015 through the national program *Villes sans Bidonvilles* implemented primarily by the holding

company Al-Omrane. Established in 2004, Al Omrane integrates the functions previously held by three different government agencies (Agence Nationale de Lutte Contre l’Habitat Insalubre (ANHI), the agency in charge of resettling slum-dwellers; the Attacharouk Co., a public developer of large real estate projects; and Société Nationale d’équipement et de construction, a public engineering and contracting company) to execute the government’s national housing and urban policies (UN-Habitat 2012). Al-Omrane’s work can be categorized into four main programs: low-cost social housing production, re-housing bidonville and shack dwellers (for the Cities without Slums programme), housing construction in the south of the country, and the development of “new towns” (Al Omrane 2015).

Between 2004 and 2011, Al Omrane produced 1,138,627 housing units. Affordable housing is cross-subsidized by the construction and sale of market rate housing for middle and high income households. In 2010, of 107,400 units produced, 33,000 units were low cost units; 37,200 were affordable units for moderate-income households, and the remaining 37,200 were for sale at market rates. According to the Ministère de l’Habitat et de la politique de la ville, over 200,000 households had benefited from the program by mid-2015.

Prior to 2011, Tunisia’s experience in slum upgrading had achieved the highest rate of success managing to eliminate slums throughout the country. The *Agence de Réhabilitation et de Rénovation Urbaine* (ARRU) is one of the oldest public enterprise mandated to improve the living conditions of the urban poor in the Arab world through improvement, rather than resettlement. Established in 1981, ARRU coordinates and cooperates with other public agencies, including local authorities, to offer loans for housing construction and improvements, renovate older neighborhoods, regularize informal settlements on the urban periphery, and provide basic services such as water, sanitation, and schools. Its funding comes from the National Solidarity Fund (about 65 per cent) the Housing Fund, the national government, and the private sector (UN-Habitat unpublished).

From 2002 to 2009, ARRU’s urban projects affected over 1.1 million people at a cost of over USD 72 million (UN-Habitat 2012). In 2012, ARRU launched a new program to rehabilitate and integrate 83,000 homes in 73 residential areas, affecting approximately 430,000 inhabitants. ARRU has focused more recently on the integration of different marginalized neighborhoods into the urban fabric through service provision projects and housing rehabilitation to decrease urban disparities. Its task has been vastly increased by the proliferation of informal settlements around Tunis and other key cities in the aftermath of the 2011 turmoil and civil unrest.

The *Agence National de l’Amélioration et du Développement du Logement* in Algeria was established in 1991 to build affordable housing for salaried worker households. In 2001 it was mandated to undertake a program to lease housing to low-income households. Algeria’s slum upgrading activities, led by AADL, have been concentrated in five governorates (Oran, Constantine, Skikda, Annaba, and Guelma) and affected 55,000 people (AADL 2015). A national census of unsafe and inadequate housing in 2007 identified over 500,000 dwellings. The

situation is primarily being addressed through the construction of new public rental housing, but also upgrading and renovation of existing units (Republique Algerienne Democratique et Populaire 2014).

Mauritania lacks the resources to meet the demands of a significant eco-migration to its main cities since the droughts of the 1970s and 1980s. The Twizé program, implemented by the *Commissariat aux Droits de l'Homme, à la Lutte contre la Pauvreté et l'Insertion*, prioritized several of the approaches advocated for in the Habitat Agenda such as regularized land tenure, microcredit for housing finance and capacity building of microenterprises for community members. However, the program did not manage to establish financial sustainability and when World Bank funding ended, rising costs of materials and construction ended this effort. Nevertheless, the program mobilized citizens, demonstrated the structure of partnership between diverse actors, and constructed 6,500 houses by the time it closed in 2008.

Much of the success of the programs in the Maghreb to decrease the population living in unplanned settlements is owed to the application of cross-subsidization. Technical assistance and the support of UN agencies and the development community has fostered the adoption of multi-stakeholder partnerships. Assistance to the social housing sector has enabled an increasing private sector role in the provision of housing for the middle classes. However, the more active role of the private sector remains concentrated on housing production for higher income households and commercial real estate development.

In the GCC, slums and informal settlements are a housing typology found in only a few gateway cities. Jeddah, Saudi Arabia has experienced rapid population growth and spatial expansion, which, combined with an inadequate supply of affordable housing and loosely enforced development regulations, resulted in 35% of the city's residents living in informal settlements as of 2009.

Jeddah's 2009 Strategic Plan Draft addresses unplanned settlements and recognizes both the social importance of such areas as well as the the public health and security issues they raise for the municipality. An institutional response began in 2007 with the establishment of the public enterprise Jeddah Development and Urban Regeneration Corporation (JDURC) and the "Jeddah without Slums" programme. JDURC's mandate includes limiting slum areas, developing sustainable housing solutions, and establishing public-private partnerships and special purpose vehicles to execute and manage durable shelter solutions (JDURC 2015). To anticipate the 2029 population of 5.7 million, Jeddah's Strategic Plan calls for the construction of 950,500 housing units, with 685,000 units affordable to lower- and middle-income groups in an effort to decrease informal urbanization and precarious housing (Jeddah Municipality 2009).

City-states on the Arab peninsula face urban development challenges associated with low cost housing shortages and poor living conditions brought on by an influx of expatriate labour.

Kuwait, however, has had success diversifying its rental market to accommodate the needs of expatriate workers who cannot legally own houses.

The situation of informal settlements in Southern countries is characterized by limited land administration and management capacity, with various implications on territorial development and human welfare or well-being.

Khartoum is one of the few cities in the Southern Tier region adopting an approach to regularizing, improving, or providing adequate housing for its population living in informal settlements or former IDP camp situations. The Dar Alsalam concept, a sites and services scheme which attempted to reverse the negative outcomes of slum eradication practices from the 1970s and 1980s, has secured tenure for over 250,000 households and has been replicated across Khartoum (UN Habitat 2012). This process, however, has accelerated unmitigated migration in and around the city and resulted in peri-urban sprawl. The World Bank has made recommendations to Yemen for in situ upgrading of its slum settlements over the more expensive resettlement alternative, though tenure issues inhibit the implementation of either strategy. In Yemen, 90% of land ownership is informal, or lacking any legally recognized tenure (Dabbas and Burns 2011). The ongoing conflict has exacerbated the situation. Complicated titling and registration processes that combine traditional systems with modern registration laws in Southern countries and some other Arab states will require reform for any housing strategies in the region to be effective at providing adequate housing for the population and achieving the goals set by the forthcoming Global Housing Strategy 2025.

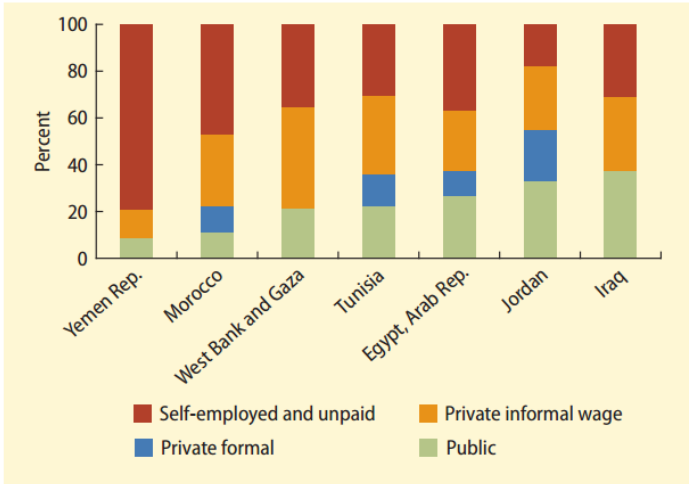
2 Urbanization and Economy

The increasing importance of cities in the Arab Region as generators of national wealth has concentrated employment opportunities in urban areas, attracting youth, rural migrants and, in the case of the GCC, skilled labor from other Arab states and unskilled expatriate workers from other parts of the world (primarily Southeast Asia).

In spite of recurring armed conflict and civil disturbances, most countries in the region have achieved significant economic gains since the turn of the millennium. With the exception of Iraq, Libya and Syria all of which experienced a drop in GDP per capita as a result of armed conflict, all countries in the Maghreb and Mashreq regions have showed steady gains in GDP since 2000 with Jordan, Morocco, Djibouti and Sudan having the most significant gains. Among the GCC countries, all countries except the United Arab Emirates experienced impressive gains with Qatar and Kuwait showing the highest gains – 531% and 321% respectively.

GDP growth in in the non-oil producing countries of the region has been moderately low, hovering around 2% over the past decade and, according to World Bank estimates, has been primarily driven by demographic and structural change. While the increase in the share of the working age population has contributed 50% of aggregate GDP per capita over the last 20 years, unemployment rates remain high. The urban-based informal economy has absorbed many of the job entrants in the labor force, primarily in low productivity small-scale activities. Job growth is through micro startups with less than five employees, who are often unpaid family members. They accounted for 9% of job creation in Tunisia between 1996 and 2010 and 77% in Lebanon between 2005 and 2010 (World Bank, 2015).

Figure 11: Work Status of Employed Individuals in Selected MENA Countries (2005-2010)



Source: World Bank 2013

Local producers and firms producing for the domestic market continue to face public control of critical links in the supply chain and cumbersome bureaucratic regulations that constitute a

significant deterrent for small entrepreneurs wishing to start businesses. In 2014, the World Bank estimated that, in Tunisia, the cost of compliance with the regulatory framework was equivalent to a tax on local businesses amounting to 13% of revenue while the cost if investment incentives stood at 2% of GDP (World Bank 2014). Except for textiles and apparel, most manufacturing in Maghreb and Mashreq countries consist primarily of the assembly of imported intermediate goods, mostly from European partners, including parts for high technology products, and ingredients for medicines produced under license by local pharmaceutical companies.

Past economic policies have also contributed to increasing regional and urban disparities by concentrating industrial activities, including wholesale distribution, to the larger cities where the bulk of the domestic market is located, a key consideration for firms producing for the domestic market, and in gateway cities for firms producing goods for export. Continued emphasis on attracting foreign direct investment has reinforced the dominance of capital cities, coastal regions (as in Tunisia) and port cities such as Alexandria, Port Said and Suez in Egypt, Casablanca in Morocco, Aleppo (Syria's dominant economic center prior to the civil war), or Jeddah in Saudi Arabia.

While still a significant current contributor to the GDP in the Comoros (36%), Sudan (33%), Syria (18% in 2007), Morocco (15%), and Egypt (14%) agriculture has been a declining sector in all Arab economies while the urban-based industrial and service sectors now account for an increasing proportion of the GDP. Services are still the major contributor to the economy in the Maghreb (50 %) and of the Mashreq (60%); the bulk of urban employment in the GCC is in the service sector.

Even though the economies of the GCC countries continue to be driven by the exploitation of their oil resources, several have initiated new strategies to diversify their economic base through the development of the knowledge economy. In Saudi Arabia, for example, the non-oil manufacturing sector's share of GDP grew from 12.7% in 2005-09 to 14% in 2014. In Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia economic diversification policies have emphasized the development of manufacturing that now accounts for 25% or more of their GDP.

All governments in the region have emphasized the need to create jobs to reduce urban unemployment and provide for young entrants into the labor force. The major economic drivers have been the construction and service industries, both urban based. In Algeria, the government has actively promoted the creation of urban micro-enterprises that are estimated to have created more than 530,000 jobs between 2010 and 2013. Jordan has taken a similar approach: the government, with support from the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and the World Bank, has instituted a program to enable local banks to provide micro-financing at competitive rates to small and medium enterprises. In Sudan, the states, as the largest landowners, have taken an active role in promoting the development of urban industrial zones as well as microcredit to "productive families" operating a home-based economic activity. In the West Bank and Gaza, where continuing Israeli occupation has stifled economic development, job

creation has been largely restricted to unskilled occupations in the construction and service industries.

Both Morocco and Saudi Arabia have achieved a high level of integration of the urban economy in their national development policies. In Morocco, the upgrading of the urban environment has been an integral part of the national development policy since 2005. The strengthening and modernization of the infrastructure, including intercity transportation, improving access to ICT and providing credit to an estimate 1.5 million small and micro-enterprises, 69.8% of which are located in urban areas, as part of an effort to integrate them in the formal sector. The National Initiative for Human Development has funded over 6,000 income-generating activities in urban areas to increase employment in the commercial, service sectors; in addition it supports heritage preservation activities and handicrafts.

In 2009, the Council of Minister adopted an ambitious Saudi Employment Strategy to diversify the national economy, redress structural imbalances and improve the productivity of Saudi nationals in emerging sectors of the economy. A key element of the strategy is the integration of the urban economy in the national development policy. The consecutive five-year Development Plans to manage macro and sectoral objectives now include a national spatial strategy with explicit policies for national, regional and local growth centers that integrate economic development in the spatial urban plans being prepared.

Figure 12: Value Added by Industry and Services – 2010/14 (% of GDP)

	Algeria	Libya	Morocco	Mauritania	Tunisia^(c)	
Industry	47.1	-	23.4	40.9	31.1	
Services	42.9	-	55.9	37.82	88.7	
	Egypt	Iraq	Jordan	Lebanon	Palestine	Syria^(a)
Industry	14.5	-	30.0	24.8	24.1	37.9
Services	45.6	-	66.4	69.7	69.3	38.3
	Bahrain^(b)	Kuwait^(c)	Oman	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	UAE^(c)
Industry	45.7	61.0	68.6	-	56.9	54.9
Services	53.3	38.5	30.1	-	41.1	44.2
	Comoros	Djibouti^(d)	Sudan	Yemen		
Industry	11.8	16.4	20.4	48.99 ^(d)		
Services	52.6	80.1	50.4	40.46 ^(d)		

Notes: (a) 2000; (b) 1995; (c) 2010; (d) 2005

Source: World Development Indicators

In Jordan and Lebanon (and in Syria prior to the civil war) economic diversification policies have emphasized the development of manufacturing and the diversification of their economic base through the development of the knowledge economy, ICT poles and business services. The contribution of industrial activities to the GDP in these countries rose to nearly 30%; it has remained at around 15% in Egypt.

Economic activities, employment opportunities, and wealth are increasingly concentrated in one or more dominant city. In Egypt, the Greater Cairo Region accounts for 51% of the urban population, nearly one-third of Egypt's GNP, 25% of the employed labor force and 40% of industrial establishments (GOPP and World Bank 2014). In Sudan, the urban-based industrial and service sectors contributed 33.6% and 39% of national GDP respectively; in 2008 75% of all manufacturing firms and 85% of all service firms in Sudan were located in Khartoum, the country's economic engine (World Bank 2009b). In Tunisia, 59% of the population lives in the Greater Tunis region. In Jordan, Amman's share of the urban population has grown from 25% in 1990 to 42% in 2014.

In the GCC countries along the Gulf, as a result of their desert ecology, essentially all the population lives in urban areas. In Saudi Arabia, with an urbanization rate of 83%, 38% of the urban population lives in the two largest cities, Riyadh and Jeddah. In Lebanon, 44% of the total population lives in Greater Beirut. Moroccan cities accounted for 58% of the population in 2014 and generated 75% of the GDP in 2010.

Many of the region's governments are seeking to decrease the resulting development pressures on a limited number of urban agglomerations by promoting the spatial balancing of economic development through the development of peripheral industrial zones, new towns, and development corridors connecting existing growth nodes to laggard regions to improve their access to jobs and services, promote their economic development and reduce regional disparities.

Figure 13: Urban Population (millions) – 1990 and 2014

	Algeria	Libya	Morocco	Mauritania	Tunisia	
1990	13.5	4.0	23.4	409		
2014	27.3	4.9	55.9	37.82	88.7	
% in principal city	13%	25%	18%	56%	59%	
	Egypt	Iraq	Jordan	Lebanon	Palestine	Syria
1990	26.7	12.0	3.8	2.2	1.5	6.2
2014	38.6	23.0	5.5	3.9	3.5	14.2
% in principal city	48%	41%	42%	44%	-	12%
	Bahrain	Kuwait	Oman	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	UAE
1990	.4	2.1	1.2	.4	12.4	1.8
2014	.8	3.3	2.4	1.6	28.9	9.1
% in principal city	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	38% ^(a)	n.a.
	Comoros	Djibouti	Somalia	Sudan	Yemen	
1990	.1	.4	1.9	7.2	2.6	
2014	.2	.7	4.3	20.9	9.7	
% in principal city	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	25%	20% ^(b)	

Note: (a) Riyadh and Jeddah; (b) 2005 data

Source: World Development Indicators

For example, the recently adopted *Egypt 2052 Vision* consolidates the country's seven development regions into four economic clusters as part of an effort to balance development across Egypt and relieve the development pressures on Greater Cairo and on Alexandria, the country's main economic drivers. Its focus on the Suez Canal economic zone to balance the dominance of the Greater Cairo region capitalizes on the importance of the Canal as an international transport artery and benefits from the presence of the two gateway cities – Port Said and Suez. This ambitious project will require close to 30 years to attain its predicted full development potential.

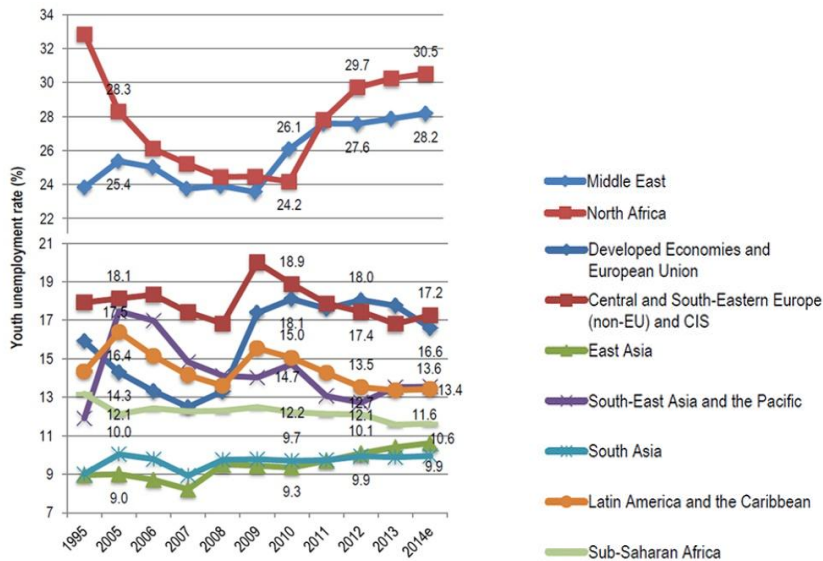
In Morocco, where three cities – Casablanca, Rabat-Salé, and Tangiers – account for 80% of the country's economic activity the government's 2012 *Politique de la Ville Référentiel* has been actively promoting the construction of new towns in selected development corridors to achieve a better urban spatial balance

A significant contributor to the region's urbanization has been the remittances of expatriate workers in the GCC and the European Union. The GCC is one of the world's top remittances generating area as they provide employment for a large number of expatriate workers, including

unskilled laborers and remittances, through both formal and informal channels represent a significant proportion of GDP, particularly in Egypt (the sixth largest recipient of remittances in the world) but also in Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia. They have risen from \$4.3 billion in 1995 to \$19.6 billion in 2014 in Egypt; from \$2.0 billion in 1995 to \$5.4 billion in 2010 in Morocco; and from \$499 million in Jordan in 1995 to \$3.5 billion in 2010. Largely invested in housing, these remittances have fueled the urban real estate market, including the development of informal settlements.

In 2014, North Africa and the Middle East had the highest youth unemployment rate of any region in the world (ILO 2015). Urbanization in Arab states has led to greater access to health and education and a sharp rise in the educational achievements of young people. One of the major issues faced by the Arab Region over the last twenty years has been the creation of jobs for entrants in the labor force. The combination of mortality rates decreasing faster than birth rates and the emphasis placed by most governments on education has resulted in a sharp rise in the number educated young people entering the labor force in most countries of the region. As a result, all countries have faced the challenge of providing employment opportunities for one the largest youth cohort in the world.

Figure 14: Youth Unemployment Rate by Region (1995 – 2014)



Source: ILO

In many countries, there has been a growing mismatch between educational achievements and available jobs resulting in increasing rates of unemployment among the educated. In Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia between 18% and 32% of people with a tertiary education are unemployed, 34% in Jordan and nearly 40% in Egypt. The increasing inverse correlation between educational achievements and employment is particularly troublesome for young people entering the labor

force. It underlines the need for achieving a better match between the demand for specific skills in emerging economic sectors (information technology, for example) and the training available in local universities. In Egypt, for example, in spite of one of the best tertiary educational system in the Middle East, 44.6% of university graduates under the age of 30 are unemployed as opposed to 35.6% for the age group and 31.0% for all university graduates.²

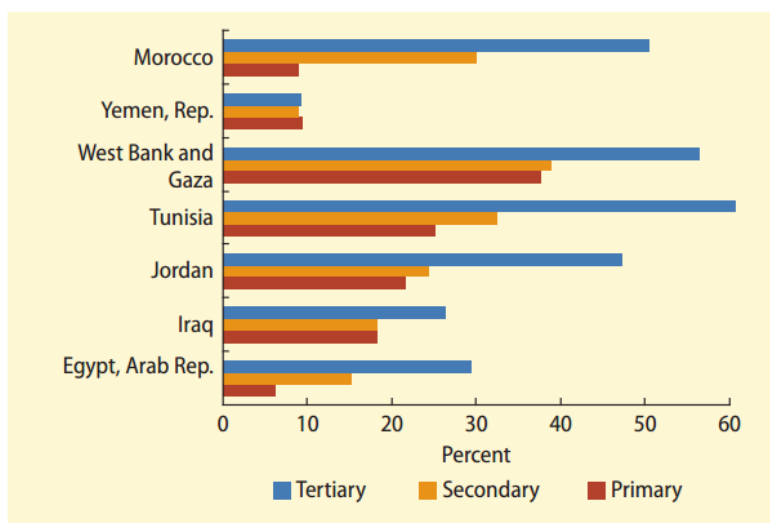
Figure 15: Youth Unemployment in Selected Countries (% of 15-24 age group)

	Algeria (a)	Egypt	Jordan	Morocco	Tunisia
2000	51.3	25.5	27.9	21.4	33.0
2014	24.0	26.3	30.1	18.3 (a)	29.4 (a)

Notes: (a) 2010

Source: World Development Indicators

Figure 16: Unemployment Rates in Selected MENA Countries by educational level, individuals ages 15-24, 2005-2010



Source: World Bank 2013

While still relatively low, the labor force participation rate for women has made substantial progress but there has been a growing mismatch between available jobs and their rising educational achievements. In Egypt, 42% of females with a tertiary education are unemployed as opposed to 39% of males; in Morocco, 33% of females with a tertiary education and 16% of males are unemployed.

² 2nd Quarter, 2015

The legacy of centrally managed economies still hampers the economic performance of many non-oil producing countries. Their industrial policies, aimed at attracting foreign investments, continue to offer investors bringing in foreign exchange fiscal incentives and preferential treatment in the form of subsidized land, energy and infrastructure and, in the case of higher technology sectors, business services.

These policies have put many domestic activities at a disadvantage, perpetuated low value added jobs. It has limited employment opportunities for the growing number of higher education graduates and maintained low salary levels that are exacerbated by subcontracting systems that prevail in both the formal and informal sectors and make living wages difficult to come by for workers, with the possible exception of semi-skilled construction worker.

3 Urbanization and Social Equity

The Arab region is experiencing a critical period in its history, marked by political, economic, social, and cultural transitions. The reality and perception of exclusion among the poor and the frustrated expectations among the middle classes built up political pressure leading to civil unrest in 2011. Civil strife erupted in the larger cities and wars spread in Iraq and Syria. Every neighborhood in every city of the affected countries experienced the turmoil to a greater or lesser degree. Violence and fear of violence led to massive population movements.

The civil unrest in many countries has catalyzed processes that seek to establish new modes of governance and development. Social equity has become a hallmark of several countries' vision for their development and has been at the forefront of citizen calls for change. Achieving social equity and empowering vulnerable and marginalized populations require action in all aspects of urban development. The right to participate in meaningful local elections allows inclusiveness in political life, while universal access to basic services and to living wage earning opportunities ensures citizens ability to meet their basic human needs. Land dynamics in the region and across the world underpin physical manifestations of social equity and access to adequate shelter for all. Governments face numerous challenges intervening and regulating land and housing markets in a way that produces sustainable and inclusive Arab cities.

In labor sending countries, particularly in the Mashreq, remittance-driven urbanization, formal and informal, sustained by high rates of household formation and pervasive housing shortages, has sent land values skyrocketing beyond the affordability of many among the middle classes. The proliferation and subsequent densification of informal settlements has accelerated and sharpened class differentiation within them. Rising levels of social consciousness are putting increasing pressure on governments to alleviate the disparities and inequities prevailing in the cities and to enable access to land legally and financially. Upgrading without displacement and in situ re-blocking has become the standard public intervention since the mid-1980s. These efforts are laudable because they valorize the assets of the poor. On a longer time frame, beyond five years after project completion, population movements induced by the workings of the private real estate market cause displacement.

These dynamics raise a question as to whether public improvement projects can propel a lower - income deteriorated area towards social balance. Experiences in the Arab cities and elsewhere indicate that in well located areas, investments providing access and services can be a sufficient catalyst to attract the private investment needed to drive the improvement process. However, rapidly appreciating land values and opportunities for commercial projects give private investors and developers the tools to spur turnover. A degree of social mixity is restored at the cost of excluding the poor. In areas in less desirable locations efforts at sustained improvement with the support of public authorities generally end up faltering. The degree of social balance achieved in the immediate aftermath of projects reverses and the area declines once again.

Governments have tried promoting inclusion by increasing the affordability of land and housing. Capping the price of land in publicly sponsored projects has invariably resulted in peripheral locations where isolated projects house the poor and those who have lost their homes due to disasters or forced evictions. Subsidizing the cost of urban land has encouraged the development of high end suburban subdivisions that have since 2010 evolved into gated communities eroding the original objective of incentivizing physically and socially cohesive projects.

The middle class has a critical role to play in linking the upper and lower strata within the social structure of a city. A key defining factor of the middle class is their ownership of productive assets, including land and property. The spatial location of the middle class, their housing conditions, access to jobs and services, and lifestyle shape the aspirations of poorer populations and hence, contribute to defining the terms of social inclusion and exclusion. Development of the middle class in the Arab world and across the globe is seen as a critical source of skilled labor, a vibrant consumer class, and an entrepreneurial group that provides important support to economic growth and development. The middle class of a given society also often share social and political behaviors that work to bolster democratic processes. Privatization and economic reforms have led to many changes in the characteristics of the middle class that government agencies such as Jordan's Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC) has attempted to follow up on, undertaking studies periodically since 2008.

Today, cities are becoming more socially diverse and more fragmented spatially. Subdistricts are becoming more inclusive economically while individual neighborhoods are becoming more homogeneous socially, ethnically, and religiously particularly in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, which have a multiplicity of denominations.

The 2011 crisis demonstrated the contribution of social exclusion to political unrest and turmoil. With security as a priority criterion conditioning locational choice, spatial segregation and social homogenization within cities has increased. The fragmentation of cities into ethnic and religious enclaves sharing few connections other than transportation links will present a major challenge in post conflict construction.

3.1 Public Space in Cities

Except in historic centers, public space shapes the image and cohesion of neighborhoods more than the buildings, yet it receives less attention than infrastructure and housing from local authorities and central governments in the region. Incompatibility of lifestyle is a major driver of spatial segregation and incompatibility of behavior is a key factor in the increasing lack of social trust. This has resulted in a resurgence of semi-private spaces where admission is limited to particular user groups by fees or rules. Once confined to ethnic/religious meeting places and elite

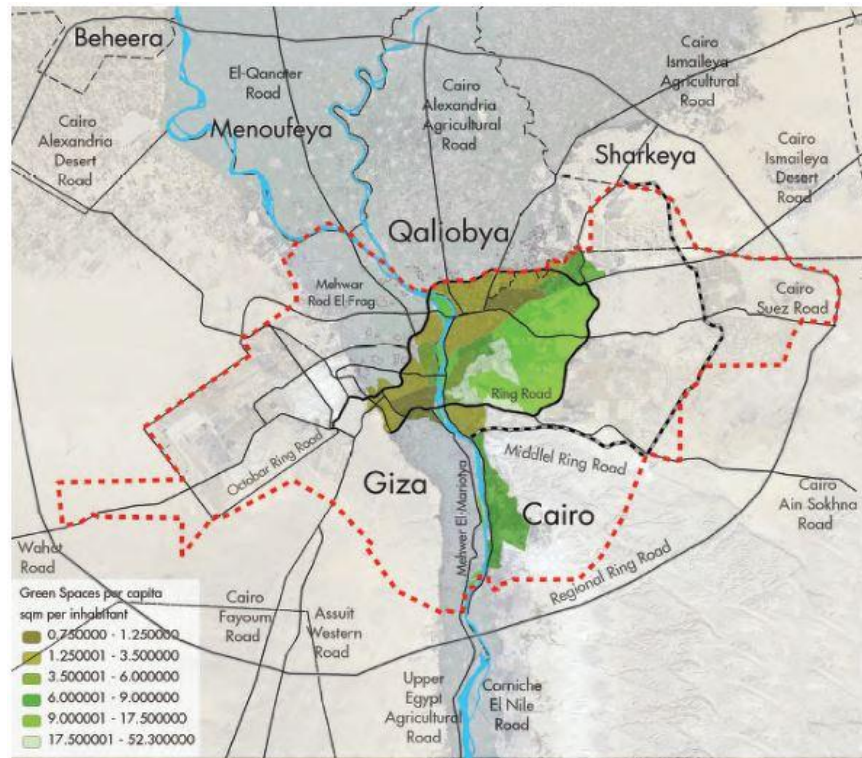
clubs, this trend is extending to shopping malls and recreation areas and is a particularly disturbing recent evolution.

Souks, specialized shopping streets and markets, corniches, public parks and beaches still offer spaces where different social groups and income classes can mix. Public space has an important social function, though is often in limited supply in Arab cities. The turmoil that began in 2011 has exacerbated encroachments on public and green spaces as a result of a lack of enforcement and of population displacements. Every effort must be made to improve and preserve them. Some spaces have been used as gathering places for protestors and certain public squares are viewed as symbols of political resistance.

Public open space and green space in Mashreq cities is constrained by rapid urbanization and the limited water resources that define the arid environment of many Arab cities. Furthermore, they are often concentrated in city centers and wealthier neighborhoods, resulting in unequal access. The rehabilitation of many of the historic centers and *medinas* in the Maghreb have led to substantial investments in public and green spaces. Residents of Rabat, for example, enjoy an average of 20m² of green public space per inhabitant. The governor mobilized almost 32 million DH in 2014 for investment in green space projects (El Aissi 2014).

In the urbanized area of the Greater Cairo Region, on the other hand, there is approximately 3m² of green, open space per inhabitant, which is among the lowest ratios in the world (GOPP 2012). The World Health Organization has recommended that cities have a minimum standard of 9m²/person. There is therefore an acute need to introduce open spaces in the very dense fabric, particularly in the overcrowded informal settlements, where public circulation space is often unlandscaped, ill maintained, and hostile. The ministries, the governorates, and most civil society organizations in Egypt agree on the need for open space, resulting in its incorporation into policy for improving the living environment. In Giza Governorate, some parks and land holdings still exist but are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture, which needs to cooperate with the Governorate to improve the existing public gardens in bad need of rehabilitation and create new ones.

Figure 17: Green space per capita in the Urban Areas of the Greater Cairo Region



Source: GOPP 2012

Vacant and underutilized lots offer significant opportunities for increasing open space in Arab cities to improve urban livability and foster greater social cohesion. In the mid to late 2000s, the municipality of Beirut purchased a combination of plots in overcrowded neighborhoods and open, vacant lots with the objective of adding 33 public gardens to the 23 that already existed in 2007. Beirut's density and private developer driven construction since the war has led to limited provision and maintenance of green space, with an average per capita area of green space per inhabitant at a reported 0.8 square meters (NOW Lebanon 2007).

The government of Jordan has adopted a national project for the greening of municipalities. The Green Amman 2020 Initiative was launched in 2014 in an effort to rehabilitate existing open spaces and create new ones. According to the Greater Amman Municipality, the city has 145 parks and 2.5% of the metropolitan area consists of green space.

While Algeria has made notable progress in the provision of decent housing, it's current *Schéma National de l'Aménagement du Territoire* recognizes and prioritizes improving the living environment and preserving public spaces as a necessary step to eradicate social inequalities (Republique Algerienne Democratique et Populaire 2014). Its capital Algiers disposes of 6m² of green space per inhabitant (Wilaya de Ain Temouchent).

The rehabilitation or creation of public and green space in Gulf cities is a component of state's policy to improve livability. Open space had shrunk in many Saudi cities such as Riyadh, whose green areas dropped from 78m²/person in 1950 to 16m² in 1999 (UN-Habitat 2012). In Jeddah, 2 m² exist per urban resident, prompting the Jeddah Strategic Plan to 1450 AH to include increasing open public spaces. The government's national efforts to increase cultivated areas are primarily rural endeavors expected to alleviate the harshness of climatic conditions, particularly given current climate change predictions (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2014). Feedback from a 2009 citizen survey in Doha has informed the Qatar National Vision to expand green spaces in urban areas to combat the country's sustainability challenges in light of rapid construction. Dubai and Abu Dhabi's rapid construction booms have also left little room for public green space, accounting for 2% of Dubai's urban area as of 2015. Abu Dhabi's 2030 planning vision seeks to create vibrant public spaces in a global strategy of connectivity and through transit-oriented development that encourages walking.

The Khartoum State Structure Plan (2008-2033) includes proposals for the creation of larger, regional parks in rural forested areas of the governorate, as well as converting an abandoned railway station into a park and upgrading Omdurman and Al Lafa markets in urban Khartoum. These proposals are seen as useful and functional means to preserve open space and complement the effort to provide green space within the city by landscaping interstitial areas and major roads, including the Nile Corniche. The review of Djibouti's city plan has also considered the creation of public spaces in an effort to improve access to services in the city.

Figure 18: Urban Greening Intervention in Khartoum State Structure Plan



Source: KPP5

3.2 Women in Urban Development

The inclusion and empowerment of women is critical to enhancing social equity. Several gains have been made in countries going through political and economic transitions towards increasing participation in civic and political activity. Empowerment efforts by Arab countries recovering from the recent turmoil and associated economic downturns are focusing on expanding their role in all spheres of urban life. Region wide women's participation rate in the labour force increased from nearly 20% to 22% (UN Women 2015). Specific countries have witnessed more progress than others.

Women's participation in economic activity has been greatly enhanced by the roles they had to assume in labor sending countries. Throughout the region there have been noticeable shifts in social-cultural traditions limiting the scope of their participation in the social, economic, and political spheres. In Mashreq countries women have had full political rights since the 60's and have held ministerial level positions, as well as, elected memberships in parliament, national councils, and commissions. However, their representation in the judiciary is still limited. The ongoing conflict in Syria has adversely affected women and youth in the war zones, as well as, among IDPs and refugees whose rights need to be restored and upheld as per UNHCR conventions. Similarly, women's participation in urban economic activities in Iraq have increased slightly because of the impacts of war and continued conflict that have disproportionately affected their development, education, and participation in economic and political life, in addition to continued cultural and social challenges (Republic of Iraq 2014).

Despite more conservative attitudes towards women in the GCC than in other sub-regions, their labor force participation rates are increasing quickly, namely through civil service positions, though gender gaps persist. Women's labour force participation rate in 2013 was highest in Qatar (51%) and experienced the largest increase in United Arab Emirates (from 25% in 1990 to 47% in 2013) (UN Women). Youth unemployment remains an acute challenge and disproportionately affects women – 51% of women ages 15-24 were unemployed in 2013 compared to 23% of young men.

Legal candidacy quotas have been established in several countries, primarily through election legislation. Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and Tunisia have quotas for members of the lower houses of parliament stipulated in their constitutions (Global Database of Quotas for Women 2015). In addition, Egypt's 2014 constitution provides for increased representation of women and youth on local councils (Tadamun 2013). In Algeria, Libya and Morocco, as of 2012, women members comprised between 8% and 11% of the lower parliamentary houses (UN Habitat 2012). Additionally, at the central level, ministries and gender units within different ministries have been established dedicated to women's issues, such as in the case of Palestine's Ministry of Women's Affairs established in 2003 (State of Palestine 2014). Mauritania capitalized on its political transition in the 2005 – 2007 period to legally establish a quota of 20% women

representation on municipal councils and a recommendation that one of the two deputies of each regional capital governor be a woman (Centre Maghrébian d'Etudes Stratégique and KAS 2014)

Urban governance in Gulf states involves primarily male nationals, though inclusion of women has made significant progress since the mid 1990s. Qatar was the first Gulf country to allow women to run in municipal elections in 1999, with the first woman municipal official elected in the region in 2003 (UN-Habitat 2012). Women were first elected or appointed to political positions in Oman in 2000, with universal suffrage following in 2003 (Al Kitbi 2008). Political reform in Bahrain in 2002 granted women the right to vote; the first woman to serve on a municipal council was elected in Muharraq in 2010 (UN-Habitat 2010). Women in Kuwait earned the right to vote in 2005. After the partial election of the United Arab Emirates' legislative body, the Federal National Council, women represented 22.5% of the body's membership. In 2015, women in Saudi Arabia participated in municipal elections for the first time as both voters and candidates following a 2011 decision by King Abdullah. Women won 20 out of 2,000 positions in the 2015 election (Amos 2015).

3.3 Accessibility and the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

An important international policy affecting urban development since Habitat II has been the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006. Furthermore, inclusive and universal access to urban services has been integrated into the Sustainable Development Goal 11 targets dealing with sustainable cities and communities. These targets call attention to the vulnerability of persons with disabilities in terms of accessible public transport systems and accessible design of public green spaces.

Estimating the number of persons with disabilities in Arab states is a challenge since many national statistics are collected using self-reporting methods and social stigma often leads to underreporting. Most progress in the Arab world has focused on improving the environment for persons with physical disabilities. Outside of social assistance programs for lower income disabled persons, many Arab country policies and frameworks address disability from the perspective of the elderly. However, the 2004 Jordanian census indicated that 20% of the population with disabilities was under 15 years old and a large proportion of disabled persons are in the 15 and 35 age bracket. The latter age groups are likely to experience an increase in disabled persons as a result of the ongoing conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, and Somalia.

The needs of persons with disabilities in the region are primarily supported and met through ministries of health, education, and social affairs, non-governmental organizations, foundations, international donors. Community-based organizations play an important role in programs for persons with disabilities in Palestinian cities, particularly in terms of raising community awareness to avoid stigmatization and discrimination. In Lebanon, a multi-stakeholder

partnership composed of professional associations, public and private sector actors, and NGOs (notably Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union) has launched an Inclusive Standards Manual with a Training Manual to raise awareness about inclusion of people with disabilities specific to the Lebanese context.

Jordan was one of the first countries in the Middle East to adopt and reform legislation to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities and end discriminatory regulations, rules, or procedures in national legislation after the ratification of the UN convention. The establishment of the Higher Council for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities (HCAPD) and the 2010-2015 National Strategy for people with disabilities drafted by the Council are important steps towards implementing the convention and building more inclusive cities. Other countries in the Mashreq have expressed their commitment to the promotion of urban development inclusive of persons with disabilities through practice and visioning. Iraq's report to Habitat III confirms a commitment in the national vision to obtaining better information about persons with disabilities to enable effective expansion of services to them. Palestine has focused on rehabilitation systems since the late 1980s.

The Gulf countries are among the most advanced in the region in terms of enacting legislation promoting universal design in construction and the planning of public space. In Abu Dhabi, the public and private sectors offer a variety of services, programs and initiatives to support people with special needs and/or disabilities. Bahrain has a legislative framework to ensure accessibility of the built environment for persons with disabilities and action to date has included a disabilities component in the training of professionals in fields related to the built environment. In Oman, the National Committee for the Services of Disabled Persons and local authorities monitor accessibility in the built environment and adherence to legal regulations of accessible standards (Abdel Samed 2010). Dubai has pursued a highly inclusive agenda for people with disabilities since the adoption of the Law No. (2) Of 2014 on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the emirate. It aims to be a handi-cap friendly city by 2020.

Armed conflict in several Arab states threatens the existing accessible housing stock and can result in an increase in physical disabilities among civilians and fighters from injuries sustained in the war zones and terrorism attacks, as well as, a higher incidence of mental trauma. As Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Yemen emerge from conflict and develop housing policies that consider the resettlement of the displaced and the reintegration of fighters, housing production will need to consider principles of universal design to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities to appropriate housing. Many countries in the region experiencing conflict are focused on addressing urgent priorities linked to security, though it will become increasingly important to attend to the implementation of the CRPD in a post-conflict setting when urban reconstruction processes are initiated. Municipalities in many Arab states are responsible for issuing building permits and undertaking public works and therefore, play a key role in enforcing the application of inclusive codes and design principles.

4 Urbanization and Environment

Climate change trends in the Arab region point to a marked decrease in rainfall, with heat waves and droughts of varying severity. A concomitant increase in episodes of brief heavy rainfall will cause flash flooding resulting in casualties, displacement, and damage to public and private property. Infrastructure can suffer severe disruption as segments of roads, particularly unpaved ones, are washed away. Arid mountainous areas within the region are exposed to such storms, including parts of Jordan, Syria, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Egypt where the valley narrows and the Sinai, Western Saudi Arabia – notably Asir, and other locations where the combination of topography, seasonal winds, temperature and moisture patterns are conducive to the formation of storms.

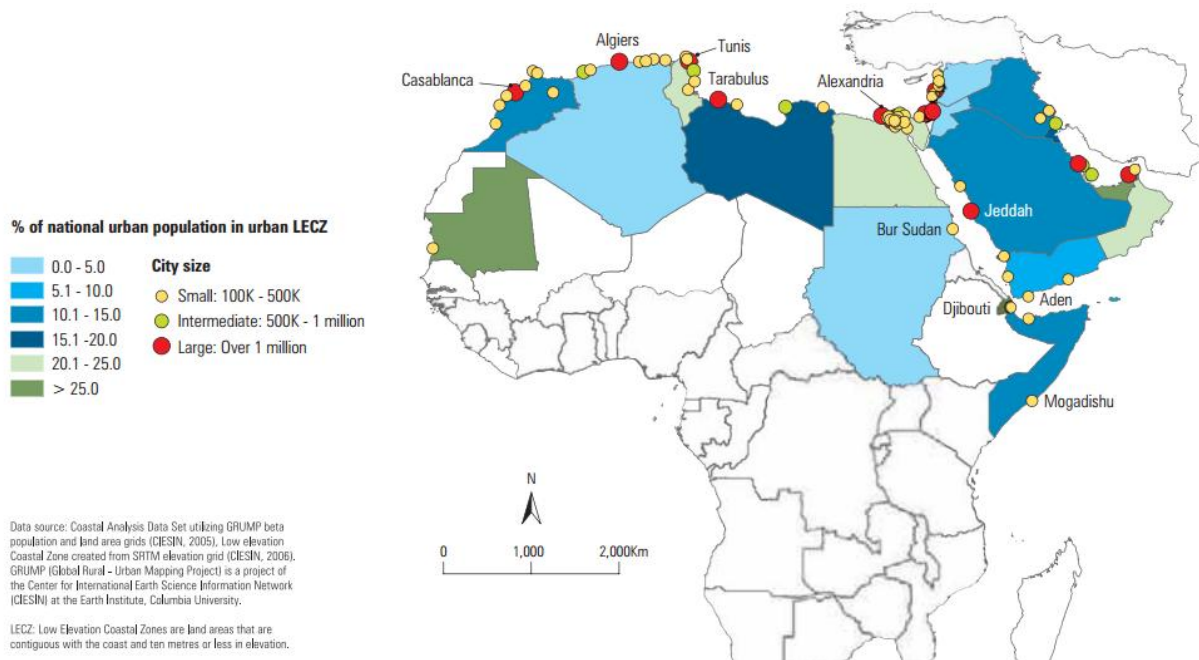
Funding for the UN Green Climate Fund has been lagging well below the commitments made, which constrains support to poorer vulnerable countries in the region and elsewhere. Countries, sub-national jurisdictions, and cities have to integrate green infrastructure in their plans to improve the living environment and enhance their competitiveness. The great advances in renewable energy technology could be better utilized. The cost of solar panels has decreased substantially during the past decade. This downward trend is an important mechanism for emissions reduction in the region given the high number of clear sunny days in all countries. Wind farm prices have also declined, but require appropriate wind patterns, which are present in some locations of every country in the region. In Jordan and Lebanon households have installed solar panels to heat hot water. The recent discovery of new natural gas fields will help Egypt, the region's most populous country, reduce somewhat its emissions, if it is used to replace diesel oil in power plants. Gas distribution networks have been built in Cairo and Alexandria and are widely used in water heaters and cooking stoves in upper and middle income homes. Inhabitants of older neighborhoods most often are not connected and peri-urban informal settlements have yet to be serviced.

While few development plans specifically address climate change, all development plans look at agricultural and pastoral production. The protection of agricultural land is sought for different reasons. Sudan focuses on produce and leather exports, Egypt on food security, Jordan mentions CO₂ absorption, and Morocco on the management of destructive climatic events that damage crops. For preservation of agricultural land to achieve its potential mitigating effect, fertilizer use must be rationalized to avoid with adverse impacts from runoff polluting rivers and creating “dead zones” in lakes, estuaries, and coasts at the mouth of rivers.

Inadequate management of water bodies, wetlands, and floodplains has removed the natural buffers that have stabilized banks, absorbed pollutants, stored floodwater and reduced the destructiveness of flashfloods. Restoring the environmental damage is a challenge that demands a commitment to rebalance the interaction between communities and sensitive areas critical to preserving water quality and livelihoods, as well as, marine and wildlife habitats.

The World Bank estimates climate change in the Arab region will expose 80–100 million people to water stress and 6–25 million people to coastal flooding by 2025. In addition, agriculture yields, particularly in rainfed areas, are expected to fluctuate widely, with a significantly lower average in the long term. Responses to climate change in the region tend to be remedial when emergencies arise rather than part of an adaptation strategy that builds resilience. Climate change research and projections of the impacts in the countries are improving, but have yet to capture the attention they deserve. Socio-economic vulnerability is also significant, with the rural poor and internally displaced people particularly exposed and vulnerable (World Bank 2014a).

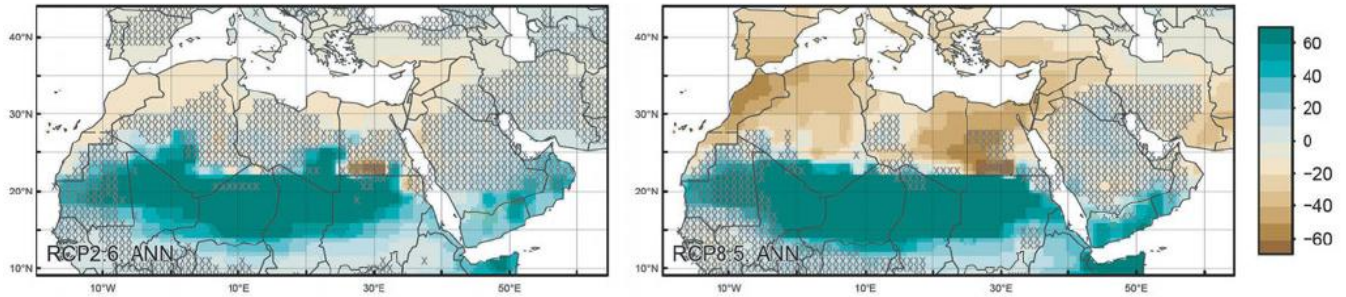
Figure 19: Percentage of National Urban Population Living In Low-Elevation Coastal Zones (LECZ)



Source: UN-Habitat Global Urban Observatory 2008

The latest IPCC report indicates the extent to which the Arab region will be affected by climate change by 2050. Temperatures are expected to rise 1.5-2 degrees above per-industrial temperatures, triggering reduced precipitation, more frequent and severe droughts, and episodes of heavy rainfall and flooding. Sea level is predicted to rise between .1 to .3 meters depending on coastal locations (IPCC 2013). These trends will not affect the sub-regions equally since they are in different climatic zones.

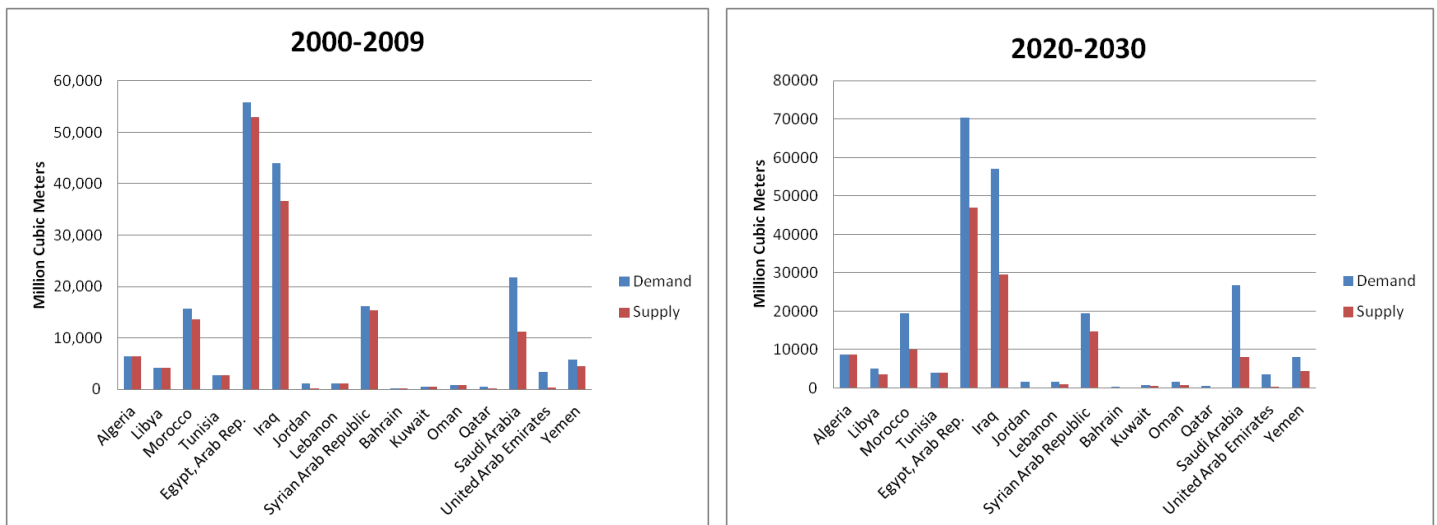
Figure 20: Mean percentage change in the aridity index in a 2°C world (left) and a 4°C world (right)



Source: World Bank 2014.

With 85% of its geographic area classified as arid, water availability is the most critical issue facing the region, where 60% of the countries are already suffering from serious shortages with over half under absolute scarcity level of 500 m³/capita/year of renewable water (Pivac 2015). The rivers have little or no allocated water remaining and all allocated shares are fully used. Aquifers and subterranean water resources are over exploited with withdrawals exceeding natural replenishments rates. Libya, Jordan, Yemen, and Syria are the most water stressed countries. As is the case worldwide with exception of city states, agriculture consumes between 70 to 80% of the water, while its contribution to the GDP in 2014 was 3.8% in Jordan, 10% in Algeria, 14.5% in Egypt, 16% in Morocco, and 29.2% in Sudan, the least urbanized country (World Bank 2014b).

Figure 21: Current and Projected Water Demand and Supply for Arab Countries (2000-2009, left; 2020-2030, right)



Source: World Bank 2012

Mashreq

In Syria, surface water resources in the western segment of the country where urban centers, economic activities, and the most productive agricultural lands are concentrated were fully utilized and groundwater withdrawals were excessive. In 2008 plans were developed to draw on the country's share of the Tigris in order to supply agricultural land in the eastern provinces where rain fed agriculture was severely stressed by the unpredictability and decline by precipitation. The livelihood of rural populations adversely affected by the droughts in 2006-2008 and caused the migration of over 60,000 impoverished farmers (World Bank 2014a). Similar migration movements occurred in Jordan.

With ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Syria since 2003 and 2011 respectively, it is to be expected that provinces will experience environmental degradation beyond the impact of climate change alone to different degrees. Populations enduring prolonged violence can hardly be concerned with anything other than survival and safety. However, since 2011 Iraq has established ten stations to monitor weather patterns. Jordan's National Land Use Plan of 2006 is being updated to expand concern with environmental sustainability in urban planning and management. The Jordanian Building Council adopted a Green Building Manual in 2013 addressing urban design, as well as, individual structures. The unique circumstances of Palestine have impeded the country's ability to implement the Palestinian Climate Change Adaptation Strategy completed in 2010. These constraints are expected to continue to hamper efforts of resilience building and adaptation.

Egypt is ranked among the top ten most vulnerable countries to climate change because of the concentration of population and economic activities in the Nile Valley and the low flat delta. The two major concerns are water shortage and sea level rise. Egypt's share of the Nile water is insufficient to supply its projected population growth. The country is drawing on aquifers at different depths in the western desert plateau and desalination to supply development along its coastline, primarily in the Red Sea and Sinai Governorates. Recent technologies have enabled the discovery of underground reservoirs, which will be able to sustain expansion of agriculture in the desert areas west of the middle valley and the delta. However, sea level rise in the Mediterranean is expected to cause salt water intrusion in the lower Delta highly productive agricultural land and the rising water tables impeding drainage are more immediate concerns than the potential area lost to flooding, for which no accurate measure exists. The impact of the higher rate of sea level rise during the period of 1993 to 2010, which is estimated at 2.8 to 3.6 mm/year by IPCC has to be assessed in combination with tectonic forces which cause subsidence in one part of the coast and uplift in others, as well as, the loss of replenishing sediments carried by the Nile since the building of the high dam. Flat topography entails greater horizontal flooding and the erosion of the sedimentary fans at the estuaries of the Nile's branches at Damietta and Rosetta is changing the coastline. Alexandria is most often considered Egypt's

most vulnerable city. However, the city proper is built on higher rocky ground with seismic faults that account for its history of earthquakes. The western districts around Lake Mariout and the villages and informal settlements in the city's hinterland are the areas at highest risk of flooding. Their vulnerability is exacerbated by the inflow of water from drainage canals into the lake causing the water level to rise. Flooding along its western edge is forcing developers to infill land up to three meters in project sites.

The Mediterranean is too constrained and its coast too ragged to allow violent storms with water surges to build up to destructive strength. However, resort development with protective breakwater structures along the coast divert natural sand carrying sea currents flowing west to east further out to sea resulting in beach erosion, lack of flushing bays, algal blooms, pollution, and destruction of the coastal marine ecology in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya. In Egypt, developers have disregarded the law prohibiting construction within 200 meters of the mean water mark and encroached on this protected zone, but the Ministry of Environment has enjoined local authorities to prevent such violations.

Maghreb

The major impacts of climate change on the coastal zones in the Maghreb are the result of shifting westerly wind patterns, which are estimated to cause a 12% reduction in the precipitation by 2030 with a concomitant decline of 10% in the agricultural and pastoral production (UN-Habitat 2012). Furthermore, stormy weather in the Southern Atlantic Ocean has triggered some damaging floods. In addition to improved irrigation and wastewater reuse, Maghreb countries are also expanding their reliance on desalination.

Morocco's Ministry of General Affairs and Governance worked in partnership with the World Bank to gather data and develop models for various climatic events. The study recommended the establishment of a National Office of Risk Management that would coordinate actions by ministries, local authorities and other actors (MUAT 2015).

Asides from Egypt, Tunisia is the most vulnerable country to sea level rise in the Southern Mediterranean, given the magnitude of urban development along the coast, the location of its major cities and its current and planned economic activities including tourism and ICT. Drier weather and salt water intrusion will also affect its agriculture production. Tunisia is the only country in the region and the third worldwide, along with Ecuador and the Dominican Republic, to have included a reference to climate change in its constitution, which was adopted in 2014. The Tunisian article stipulates that "the state guarantees the right to a healthy and balanced environment and the right to participate in the protection of the climate" (Paramaguru 2014). It essentially empowers public and private entities to participate in activities fostering a "healthy environment."

Mauritania is the country within the sub region most impacted by climate change. In the Sahel zones of Mauritania, nomadic households lost their way of life and livelihoods and moved by the

hundreds of thousands to Nouakchott and Nouadhibou where deeper wells could reach the groundwater. Every major drought triggers migration to the cities. In Nouakchott, for example, over a 30 year period, from 1970 to 2000, the population increased from 40,000 to over 700,000 (Serageldin 2001). Furthermore, large sections of Nouakchott are below sea level making them vulnerable to rising sea levels in the Southern Atlantic and adding to saltwater intrusion in its porous soil. While central and local authorities work with donors and NGOs to extend the water supply to the peri-urban areas, port development has altered the flow of coastal currents resulting in substantial erosion along the city's southern coastline that in some years reached close to 25 meters (Abu-Ata 2015).

GCC

In the GCC heat waves, flash floods, and sandstorms will increase. With the exception of Oman, the Emirates are geographically constrained and had to cope with impressive demand for large scale urban development. Expansion has been accommodated by land reclamation and infilling of the salt marshes and flats. Today an increasing proportion of the population lives on the lowlands, leaving little remaining natural features and habitats to absorb flood water and storm surges.

Within the sub-region, changes in climate are also expected to reduce long-term water supplies, increase the reliance on desalination with subsequent energy costs, and reduce available water for agriculture. Desalination already provides two-thirds or even more of the potable water used in the UAE, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain, while in Saudi Arabia it accounts more than 70% of water used in cities – which is equivalent to about 60% of the world's desalinated water. To employ better water technologies and energy-efficient desalination, GCC governments are investing upwards of USD 100 billion from 2011 and 2016 (Pivac 2015).

In the UAE, an estimated 85% of the population lives a few meters above sea level (UN-Habitat 2012). The Abu Dhabi Environment Agency projection of the effects of sea level rise in 2009 prompted recognition of the necessity to develop an integrated coastal management plan.

In Bahrain, the supreme Council for Environment stated that based on IPCC projections, from 5% to 11% of the country's area will be flooded by sea level rise (UN-Habitat 2012). Flood barriers will be constructed to protect the land from sea level rise of up to 60 cm by 2100. A National Disaster Management Committee required all new projects to be designed to withstand this height of sea level rise.

Oman is far more exposed to storms that develop in the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea with 50% of its population living along the coast in Muscat and in the Batinah area (UN Habitat 2012). In 2007, cyclone Guno, the first to hit the region, demonstrated how vulnerable the country was to extreme weather events. The government established a Ministry of Environment and Climatic Affairs, which set up a network of hydro meteorological gauges and issued

guidelines for development in flood prone areas. Major infrastructure projects are needed to enable drainage to handle flash floods and storm surges.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been experiencing changing weather patterns with a marked increase in heat wave, sand storms, and episodes of heavy rainfall and flash flooding. In response to the projected potential increase in natural disasters, the government has established the Sustainable Planning Guidelines for Urban Growth in 2013, which prohibit the siting of new development projects in areas at risk of flooding, seismic activity, or environmental pollution. This is a laudable first step that should be followed by implementation regulations.

Southern

The countries of the Southern Tier are located in very different climatic zones. Sudan is crossed by the African Sahel. The line of semi-desert and desert areas has moved southwards 50 to 200 km since 1930 and is projected to continue moving southwards, threatening 25% of the country's agricultural land and reducing food production by 20% (Un-Habitat 2012). Long periods of severe droughts have generated massive migration to cities along the Nile. Khartoum's population swelled as migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from the ongoing conflicts in the Darfur province sought survival and safety in the capital. In 2009, according to official statistics, Greater Khartoum hosted over 600,000 internally displaced persons in addition to 1.5 million locally integrated IDPs (Humanitarian Policy Group 2011).

In Sudan, the Khartoum area, lying at the confluence of the Blue and White Niles is particularly exposed to flooding resulting from heavy rainfall in the Ethiopian mountains that the steep topography of the upper reaches of the Blue Nile transforms into torrents. The poor, living in informal settlements or who have settled in low-laying areas of the capital, are among the most vulnerable residents to climate shocks and stresses. Flooding in 2009 affected 22,291 homes in primarily urban informal settlements in Khartoum and caused damage to critical water and sanitation systems (IFRC 2013). In 2013 flooding affected nearly half a million people nationally (OCHA 2013) and in 2014, heavy rains resulted in flooding that affected over 32,000 people in Khartoum. Addressing climate change issues in Sudan is the mandate of the Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources at the national level. Khartoum state has also established its own Council for Environment. Following the severe flooding in 2013, Khartoum state took several remedial actions such as reinforcing river banks, repairing retaining walls, relocating squatters in flood-prone areas, and encouraging durable building materials in new home construction.

Yemen displays different climatic extremes. It suffers from the most acute water shortage in the whole region with about 86 m³ of renewable water resources per person (Al Horazi 2014). Agriculture has been adversely affected by water scarcity spurring migration to the cities. Brief heavy rainfall events causes flash flooding. Flooding in 2008 was particularly damaging, resulting in loss of 6% of the country's GDP (Leister 2015).

Just as worrisome is the changing patterns of ocean currents, which are predicted to cause more frequent and extreme storms. Cyclonic events are still considered rare, although Cyclone Chapala hit Yemen for the first time of record in November 2015. After skirting Socotra, the cyclone made landfall in Mukallah. The absence of a functioning administration left the area unprepared for responding to the disaster.

4.1 Policy Considerations

The Arab Region is faced with many challenges and pressures which threaten natural resources and undermine the potential for sustainable development, including rapid urbanization; changing demography and migration trends; inadequate management of the limited resources; wars and conflicts that have exhausted the capabilities of local authorities and countries to protect the environment and respond and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The region has seen significant progress, including in the 1990s the expansion of access to water supply and sanitation services. This progress was not only undertaken to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, but is also the result of issues moving to the top of Arab countries' national agendas as important components of development and human well-being. While some environmental policies have reached their targets, other more complex environmental issues such as biodiversity loss, desertification, water scarcity, coastal erosion, and sea level rise remain insufficiently addressed throughout the region.

Over the past few decades, environmental institutions in the Arab Region have evolved from environmental units, departments in ministries, agencies or cross-sectoral councils concerned with pollution, human health and other specific issues to independent institutional entities often with executive competencies backed by national legislations. The Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) established by the League of Arab States in 1987 was the first political forum to deal with environmental issues at the Arab countries' level. Environmental institutions have faced many challenges and obstacles, as newly established institutions with a broad range of issues and responsibilities to cover in comparison with other sectoral ministries. The several restructuring of these institutions has also affected their functioning and their modest budgets have limited their capacity to implement programs, monitor regulatory compliance and promote local technical capacities. In many instances they have depended on foreign financed projects for their action programs.

While management of the environment at the national level has improved throughout the region, local initiatives have fallen short of fulfilling their mandates due to imbalances in decentralization which hampered the implementation of Local Agenda 21 for sustainable development. Adaptation measures and resiliency building rely on national planning strategies and spatial interventions that aim to preserve valuable resources and guide urban development. Inventories of the built environment and updated land use plans to account for new climate

information and models are being undertaken across the region and new government agencies are being created to evaluate exposure and vulnerability, prepare disaster management plans, and elaborate development guidelines for environmentally-sensitive areas. However, the water scarcity of the region demands new, urgent, and innovative management approaches.

At the regional scale, recent priorities have included a shift toward a focus on disaster risk reduction, which is rooted in the establishment of the UNISDR Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS) in 2007 to support Arab States and communities build their resilience and implement the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015. Subsequently, the Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020 was adopted by the Council of Arab Ministers responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) and further endorsed by heads of state at the 2nd Arab Summit for Social and Economic Development in January 2011. Most recently, in November 2015 the strategy was revised to reflect the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which is the first major agreement of the post-2015 development agenda. The Arab Strategy is seen as a bridge between national strategies and the international framework.

Reflecting the growing focus on climate change at the international level from the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 and culminating most recently in the 2015 Paris Climate Change Conference (COP21), environmental institutions in the region are expanding their ability to enhance the resilience of their cities. As part of these international discussions, Arab countries have advocated complementing the focus on climate change mitigation centered policies with policies promoting adaptation, financing, technology transfer and capacity building initiatives (Arab Group 2013). An issue of particular importance in the region, which is being championed in COP21 by the UN Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility, is the recognition that climate change is a threat to livelihoods and human safety, the needs of particularly vulnerable groups, such as migrants, refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) (The Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility 2015).

5 Urbanization and Governance

5.1 Decentralization and Central-Local Relations

All the countries of the region aside from city states have enacted decentralization policies and laws since the early 1980s. Devolving functions that affect the daily life of citizens to the level of governance that is closest to them is an accepted principle. Local authorities interact directly with the communities within their respective geographic area. They are also best positioned to lead community-based, integrated programs because they can act cross-sectorally within their jurisdiction and coordinate among the vertical hierarchies of ministries providing different service functions such as education, health, and utilities.

Arab countries have a long tradition of centralized state administration, the exceptions being the countries where the tribal structure of society generated local self-administering federal systems, including Yemen, Libya, Somalia, and Sudan. Reforming entrenched bureaucratic processes without disrupting governance is a lengthy undertaking. Aside from the oil-producing countries, this task has been made more difficult by the departure of the more qualified professionals from public administration primarily to seek higher paying jobs in the private sector. In the more centrally controlled economies, as in Egypt, this trend started in the 1990s with economic liberalization and with the privatization of many public sector enterprises in countries like Tunisia.

Mashreq

Local government legislation since the mid-1990s has increasingly decentralized various responsibilities for urban development to local authorities, while most central governments have retained control over financial resources redistributed through central government transfers to the local level. In Egypt, the governorates are the primary local authorities concerned with urban service provision and coordinate directly with the various ministries through the ministries' branch offices and executive councils. The Building Law 119 of 2008 broadened the powers and mandate of these councils in relation to territorial management and planning, financial autonomy, and consultation of stakeholders in development processes (Egyptian Official Gazette). The General Organization for Physical Planning (GOPP) in the Ministry of Housing, Utilities and New Communities is still the primary agency responsible for the preparation of national, regional, and governorate plans and provides support to governorates in the development of their structure plans, master plans, and detailed plans.

Several legislative amendments in Iraq have worked to grant numerous functions to provinces and municipalities following the central government shift from a centralized to a more federal state in 2003. The most recent amendment was made in 2013 to the Provincial Powers Act or Law 21 of 2008. Since 2012, this amendment, which benefited from technical support from UNDP and UN-ESCWA, has quadrupled the number of decentralized functions (USAID-

Tarabot 2015). Despite the progress towards a decentralized state, several challenges are still being addressed, including adoption of administrative decentralization by central and local authorities, overlapping responsibilities, coordination, and greater authority of the provinces over local jurisdictional matters (Republic of Iraq 2014).

Jordan introduced new legislation related to administrative decentralization in 2014, outlining the principles of the decentralization framework and agreed to review existing legislation to ensure that local administration was being enacted. Municipalities in Jordan are financially independent but coordinate with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs in the fields of urban planning, street maintenance, solid waste collection, building permit issuance, and setting taxes and tariffs.

Prior to the turmoil in Syria, the Ministry of Local Administration produced a Draft Law on Local Administration, which include the decentralization of responsibility for regional transportation to the governorates, as well as other functions related to services, economy, and culture.

According to Decree 118 (1977) in Lebanon, municipalities have jurisdiction over works with a “public character”. In 2009, additional responsibility for road construction, improvements, and public transportation management was decentralized to the municipalities. Given their broad responsibilities and the administrative constraints they face in terms of human and financial resources, municipal unions have emerged as a way for city councils to consolidate their capacities. Thirty-six of the 48 municipal unions in existence today were formed in the last ten years. (Atallah 2012).

Among the countries in the Mashreq, local political autonomy is particularly strong in Palestine given the territorial fragmentation caused by the Israeli occupation. This territorial split and accompanying governmental split during the 2000s further decentralized authority and service delivery as provided by the 1997 Law on Local Government enacted by the Palestinian National Authority. In 2005/2006, legislation changed the process of elections of local councils and created several joint councils to undertake service provision and development planning. Elected councils in the municipalities and villages are responsible for town planning, water and power provision, and the granting of building permits.

Maghreb

As in the Mashreq, local governance systems in the Maghreb have been influenced by the Ottoman legacy, but also include features that reflect the colonial legacy of the French in Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia. Since Habitat II, however, several reforms enacted, particularly since 2011, have sought to negotiate the mismatch between administrative decentralization to sub-national governance units and central control over local government finances.

Tunisia's new constitution promotes the autonomy of Tunisia's municipalities, departments, and regions, including their ability to engage in international partnerships (Article 140). Prior to the revolution, decentralization, while promoted in legislation such as the 1997 *Code de la fiscalité locale*, was constrained by little coordination between national, regional, and local urban plans and limited human and financial resources. Decentralization was most practically pursued through municipal development projects (undertaken in 1992 and 2010) (World Bank and Government of Tunisia 2015). With the new constitution of 2014, local authorities are mandated to undertake local service provision in an autonomous, transparent, and participatory manner (Chapter VII).

The Moroccan experience since the mid-1990s is distinguished by the creation of regions as the highest legal, sub-national, territorial division. The 1997 Law Relative to the Organization of the Region established the original 16 regions before the kingdom began a reform known as advanced regionalization in 2010, which led to the consolidation of the 16 regions into 12, with more fiscal autonomy than they previously held (Alami 2014 and FEC 1997). The regions represent an important step towards realizing policies aimed at balancing territorial development and are in line with a policy of gradual decentralization and local democracy. The Communal Charter of Law 78/2000 (modified in 2008) also established a special legal status for urban agglomerations and granted them greater responsibilities in local economic development and reducing socio-economic disparities (Royaume du Maroc 2009).

In Algeria, the competences and legal character of the provinces (*wilaya*) and communes is articulated in Law 90-08 of 1990. Legislation passed in 2011 enhances citizen participation and associative management of local services (Republique algerienne democratique et populaire 2014). Turmoil in Libya is affecting Algeria and makes it unclear whether the preferred administrative structure of the country will remain a federal system or evolve towards a decentralized, unitary state.

GCC

Central-local government relations and the evolution of decentralized power structures in the Gulf states are marked by increasing public participation in governance through popular elections, though municipalities in these states have gained little autonomy in the past two decades. Saudi Arabia held elections for half of the membership of municipal councils for the first time in 2005, with subsequent elections in 2011 and 2015. In the United Arab Emirate's federal system, elections were held to elect half of the members of the Federal National Council for the first time in 2006. While central government agencies in Qatar deliver effective services and have made significant interventions in local development, the country created a directly elected Central Municipal Council in 1999 to advise on municipal infrastructure and development projects (UN-Habitat 2012). Similarly, councils elected in Oman are primarily consultative bodies who contribute to policy formulation and budget planning though ultimate

authority lies with the head of state and the State Council. Elected municipal councils were established in Bahrain's five governorates in 2002, though they exercise limited autonomy.

Several government strategies have recognized the development gains that coordination with local authorities can bring in terms of municipal development though the devolution of responsibility to local governments is limited, with the exception of Saudi Arabia, whose regional and city councils have planning and development responsibilities in terms of maintenance of public health, management of public space, and the issuance of building permits. Saudi Arabia's shift towards more administrative decentralization in the past 20 years is particularly marked by the establishment of regional authorities (*amanat*) and enhanced institutional capacity for municipal agencies through the transfer of buildings, equipment, and expertise to train municipal staff (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2014).

The other Gulf states, most of which are highly urbanized city-states, coordinate services and decision making through various central and local bodies. The 2007 UAE Government Strategy stressed a reform of public administration that would create greater synergies between federal and local governments. Local governments in Abu Dhabi, meanwhile, have worked to increase their operational efficiency and administrative capacity to strengthen the potential of municipal decentralization. Legislation in Kuwait has vested sub-national authorities with some executive powers. Kuwait Municipality, for instance, has decision-making power related to commercial and building licensing, health and safety in workplaces, and the approval of infrastructural projects and the planning and land acquisition that accompany those projects (Aly Khedr 2010).

The holy cities of Mecca and Medina present unique urban governance and management challenges and opportunities. The significance of these sites for Muslims resulted in the establishment of a special Development Commission of Mecca, Medina, and the Holy Sites in 2004 to undertake comprehensive planning and oversee development, as well as a Higher Committee for Hajj to manage all aspects of the annual pilgrimage that brings over 2 million Muslims from all over the world to the holy cities. Furthermore, Medina was the site of the Arab World's first "Urban Observatory", established in 2004 with technical support from UNDP and UN-Habitat, the Al-Madinah Local Urban Observatory (MLUO) has inspired similar initiatives in the Arab world to establish observatories that promote multi-stakeholder consultation in the local implementation of development plans and collect critical urban data on Habitat Agenda indicators to be used in their formulation. While the observatory does not possess a legal character it plays an important consultative role to inform central government decisions and plans and was directly inspired by the recommendations that emerged from Habitat II (Madinah Local Urban Observatory 2009).

Southern

Decentralization efforts in many Southern states have had to be balanced with the establishment of order and security at the central level. Over the past two decades, governmental fragmentation

has affected urban governance in Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. In these situations, decentralization has most often followed transitional government agreements, peace agreements, or been codified in new constitutions. In Sudan for instance, the 1998 Constitutions consolidated the states in the country's federal system and the signing of the Transitional Constitution following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 granted the states political authority to enact local legislation (Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Urban Development 2014). The legislative backing of state's authority is enshrined in the 2003 Local Government Act, which also empowers them to mobilize local sources of revenue (Ibid.).

In countries experiencing geo-political fragmentation, such as Palestine and Somalia, the approach to enhanced local governance has started with increasing local capacity to deliver services with objectives ranging from nation building to the consolidation of peace. The UN's Joint Programme on Local Governance in Somalia is one such effort that began in 2013 and continues to strengthen the principles of decentralization contained in the various charters and constitution governing the various territories within the country.

International and donor support at the local level has also been a feature of decentralization efforts in Yemen with the drafting of City Development Strategies for Aden, Hodeida, Mukallah, and Sana'a with support from the World Bank and Cities Alliance. These international projects worked in tandem with an ambitious national decentralization program launched in 2000 through the Local Authority Law, which established elected districts and provincial councils and delegates planning, development, and administrative functions to local councils. However, tribal leaders varying willingness to enforce the law, overlapping jurisdictions and responsibilities, and the consolidation of the ruling party's power in 2008 governorate elections jeopardized the reform's success and ultimately led to the outbreak of violence and the ongoing civil war that has disrupted central and local governance.

The small state of Djibouti has also experienced civil unrest, though it has since expanded its decentralization process by transferring more responsibilities to regions, which received legal status and financial autonomy in 2002 (Kellam 2005). Decentralization in the Comoros has been repeatedly stalled as a result of over 30 years of successive coups. The Constitution adopted in 2001 and amended in 2009 grants certain competencies to the islands though basic service provision and inefficiencies resulting from overlapping mandates and duplicate governments remain challenges to be addressed (IMF 2004).

UN-Habitat and other UN institutions, including the World Bank, have strongly advocated decentralization and should expand their efforts to address and alleviate the constraints on implementation. Hindering factors in the Arab region, as in many regions, emanate from political and financial issues and gaps in local institutional capacity. Each country has to determine its own path towards instituting the most suitable system of central/local relations. Sudan has

adopted a federal system better suited to its tribal society but sets a development policy framework at the national level to ensure coherence.

Increasing the effectiveness of decentralized governance will depend on increasing political and fiscal decentralization to enhance the ability of citizens to elect their representatives on local governance bodies and the ability of municipalities to generate their own resources or receive transfers from the central government commensurate with the responsibilities devolved to them.

While much progress has been achieved since 1996 legislatively, almost all countries have encountered numerous challenges in their implementation, including challenges linked to turmoil in many Arab states. As was the case during the Lebanese Civil War, the functioning of municipalities is often disrupted by political and security concerns. International humanitarian relief and national reconstruction are centrally driven while coordinating with local authorities and communities. Often, legislation pertaining to decentralization has required clarification of mandates, as was the case in Iraq with amendments in 2010, 2011, and 2013 to Law 21. Amendments have been used as a mechanism to confirm the government's commitment to local decision-making and public participation. While the region has seen a significant increase in the number of elected local bodies, many heads of sub-national governments are appointed by the central government and control the executive functions.

Transfer of responsibility to local administrations also entails having municipal personnel with the required expertise. Insufficient human resources has proven a major constraint impeding the efficiency of local governance and has been met with efforts to increase training and professional education in urban fields such as planning, financial management, and various service sectors.

5.2 Citizen Participation

Habitat II in Istanbul marked a pinnacle moment in urban development with NGOs and CBOs participating in the global conference for the first time and promoting an approach that includes multiple stakeholder voices and partnerships between the public sector, private enterprise, and civil society to reach desired outcomes. The turmoil that has swept across most of the Arab world since 2011 has also heightened awareness about the importance of incorporating citizen voices into various aspects of urban governance. Inclusiveness is, today, a prime objective of the changes in the modalities of local governance in many countries.

Citizen engagement and civil society groups vary across countries and political contexts. However, there is growing recognition among several Arab cities and countries of the positive contribution of participatory approaches to urban planning and community-based initiatives to improve the living environment, provide services, and upgrade informal settlements. Furthermore, good governance supports economic development, which the global community

increasingly recognizes as requiring citizen participation to ensure transparency and accountability.

Demand driven decision making has increased in the region as elections for some or all members of local and provincial councils are held with more regularity and wider voter participation, particularly in the Gulf. Electoral mechanisms are one aspect of citizen engagement, which also needs to be pursued through information, consultation, and ultimate partnership in decision making and implementing local development initiatives. In terms of citizen's access to information, six UN-ESCWA member countries have enacted or drafted legislation on access to information. As of 2012 five countries also had relevant legislation and institutions promoting public consultation and social dialogue through specialized councils, such as the Economic and Social Council in Lebanon (UN-DESA and UN-ESCWA 2012).

In the Mashreq, citizen participation in urban development is often pursued directly through elected councils at all levels of local governance or indirectly through civil society organizations (CSOs). CSOs fill critical service gaps in urban areas and, in some cases, are the most efficient service providers for the urban poor. In Egypt, such organizations must register with the Ministry of Social Solidarity under Law 84/2002, which places certain restrictions on the funding and activities of organizations. The Ministry has produced drafts for revising current legislation since 2011 and engaged in a consultative process with civil society and NGOs to finalize a new law to govern the sector (State Information Service 2014).

Greater recognition of the contribution of public participation in local governance and planning has also been demonstrated through Ministries' promotion of participatory governance principles. Egypt's Ministry of Planning has been working with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) to implement a Participatory Development Programme in urban governorates, including Cairo. In addition to building the capacity of local stakeholders, including the staff of local administrations, youth leaders, and the private sector, the program seeks to promote public-private-community cooperation to upgrade informal settlements. In Palestine, the Ministry of Local Government developed and distributed manuals and conducted trainings for local government units to institutionalize public participation (State of Palestine 2014).

In the Maghreb, Morocco's open policy towards the participation of civil society organizations has allowed for a dramatic increase of NGOs from approximately 8,000 organizations in 1996 to over 30,000 as of 2009 (UN-Habitat 2012). The events of 2011 reverberated through Morocco with adoption of a new constitution, which provides much of the foundations of participatory urban governance, including principles of democratic participation in decisions and projects, citizen's right to a decent home, cooperation and solidarity in the promotion of sustainable development, and equity in access to basic services. Citizen involvement in urban development has also been increasing through the development and implementation of the *Politique de la Ville* (PdV) in Morocco, which was conceptualized with multi-level stakeholder consultations and

communicated through social media, reaching approximately 20,000 individuals. The new policy seeks to establish a new mode of governance that helps to achieve integrated urban development through City Contracts that concretize a shared vision for an urban development project and establish a coherent framework for coordinated action by different parties (MHPV 2014).

Since the revolution in Tunisia, the rights to political participation is guaranteed in the new constitution of 2014, including the right of citizens to freely elect their local representatives or run for local office, to gather and demonstrate, to access information, and participate in local budget decisions (CFAD and GIZ 2014). The revision of the *Loi organique des communes* and participatory development of communal investment plans constitute the legal framework of participation as Tunisia continues through its political transition. While challenges remain, particularly in the coordination of stakeholders, several concrete steps have advanced citizen participation. At the ministerial level, le Centre de formation et d'appui à la decentralization has developed a manual for local authorities and municipal councils to assist them in implementing participatory processes with technical assistance from GIZ. At the local level, Sfax launched a participatory budget program in early 2015 and since 2014, citizens of La Marsa have been co-decision makers in municipal budgeting and basic infrastructure projects.

In Mauritania, while decentralization processes have successfully established participatory governance principles among local governments and civil society, challenges in the effectiveness of citizen participation remain to be addressed.

Civil society organizations registered with the appropriate Social Affairs Ministries in each of the Gulf states work primarily in the spheres of culture, sport, recreation, and the environment. Many countries have policies restricting these organizations from involvement in political activism or from engaging in work on sensitive political and social issues. Nonetheless, the Gulf has seen the most significant expansion of citizen elected municipal councils, which constitute an initial step towards greater participation of citizens (particularly women) in local decision making. In Saudi Arabia the “Future Saudi Arabia Cities Programme” implemented by the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs with the support of UN-HABITAT has initiated participatory planning processes to support spatial planning in 17 Saudi cities (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2014).

Some Southern countries experience several barriers to successful citizen engagement. Others, such as the Comoros and Yemen have fostered the growth and development of civil society and enabled them to participate in local governance. Before the civil war, Yemen saw the emergence of approximately 2,000 CSOs, a quarter of the existing total (World Bank 2014). Citizen participation is stated as the base of local governance and democracy in Article 13 of the 2001 Comorian Constitution though it had already become a pillar of development through structural adjustment programs affecting the agricultural sector. Sudan has taken steps towards citizen engagement primarily through information sharing regarding local plans and limited consultations, as has been the case in the development of the Khartoum State Structure plan.

In other countries like Djibouti, citizen participation is not mandated in any local governance frameworks. Civil society lacks information on different local governance processes and projects to be able to engage (Kellam 2005). In Somalia, participation of civil society is concentrated in charities providing basic services and meeting humanitarian needs. Organizations are discouraged from participating in decision making under certain administrations in Somalia.

5.3 Local Finances

Financial issues have loomed large in the prevailing situation of asymmetrical decentralization. Imbalances among political competences, functional responsibilities, and financial resources affect, to varying degrees, urban planning and management at the different levels of local governance. Municipal finance, property registration procedures, and tax rolls require reform to enable local authorities to finance their operations and capital investments. Key factors affecting municipal finance include:

1. The disregard for urban development regulations, particularly since 2011, has become widespread, highlighting the need for realistic integrated national urban policy frameworks and a determination to enforce them;
2. The fluctuation of central transfers, particularly since the economic downturn in the countries affected by turmoil. Irregular and/or retrenched transfers have become the norm as countries, such as Egypt, seek macroeconomic stability by ensuring the financial soundness of the State; and
3. The inadequacy of technical and managerial capacities of local authorities to discharge their urban management functions in addition to cumbersome bureaucratic procedures, lax enforcement of regulations, and the corrupting influence of low wages, particularly at the local level.
4. The difficulties encountered in expanding local revenue, collecting taxes, and instituting a property tax that can adequately capture the real value and appreciation of urban land;

5.3.1 Revenue Sources

Despite the trend towards increasing devolution of planning and administration functions, local budgets are still centrally-controlled in almost all the countries of the region. During the turmoil, municipal budgets in the affected countries have declined significantly due to loss of public revenue from national mineral and offshore sources and the difficulty encountered in tax collection to enable central transfers. More recently, municipal budgets have also tightened in oil producing countries due to declining oil prices. Iraq and Sudan, already affected by armed conflict, and Sudan with the secession of oil-rich Sudan now also have to cope with the impact of falling oil and natural gas prices.

Local revenue sources in the Arab region primarily consist of receipts from property tax, taxes on economic activities, and fees for public services, though low collection rates and low pricing often compromise local operating performance and the sustainability of service provision. Central transfers earmarked for capital investments end up subsidizing shortfalls in operating expenditures of key services. Furthermore, the redistribution formulas in many countries do not incentivize municipalities to improve their financial performance. The only cities that can potentially raise significant local revenues are the larger, economically diversified centers. Lack of budgetary predictability has made it difficult for local authorities to track progress towards meeting their urban development objectives.

Publically owned land, which is being transferred to municipalities under decentralization laws, is a key asset for local authorities because of its potential in the financing of urban development. Governments that finance shortfalls in operating expenses with land sales however, compromise their development potential. The sale of public assets to fund operating expenditures has both long-term planning and financial implications and can only be a short-term expedient. Furthermore, the resulting unplanned spot development can become a major long-term challenge to the implementation of a coherent urban growth strategy.

The best uses of land as a financial asset has been through partnerships with the private sector on specific development projects that align with national spatial policies, such as development corridors, New Towns, and economic zones. Tax rebates and exemptions are often granted to encourage affordable housing and cooperatives as in Egypt and Morocco. In new urban developments, exemptions from one or more taxes are granted for periods ranging from 3 to 15 years to encourage investments in economic activities. These subsidies reduce tax yields while their impact on export oriented industries has been questioned.

Most importantly, the rapidly appreciating value of urban land in the region is insufficiently captured by local and central authorities due in part to the nature of real estate tax as based on the rental-value instead of the capital value of the land. This system understates the value of the real estate property while rent and tenant protection regulations further depress property assessments. The low tax yield relative to the market value of land and the spread between the rate of appreciation of serviced and unserviced land could be better used to finance infrastructure. Complex tenure systems with layers of primary and secondary rights derived from customary rules and the fragmentation of property due to inheritance laws compound the problems of inadequate property records, the identification of tax payers, and the billing and collection of taxes. Unregistered land titles are abundant in the region as high fees and cumbersome administrative procedures discourage registration and the issuance of titles while additions to properties are largely unreported and untaxed. Furthermore, in most countries, informal settlements on the urban fringe are not taxed until they are regularized.

5.3.2 Local Financial Management

Operating expenditures dominate local budgets, with salaries, wages, buildings, and equipment taking up large proportions of operating budgets, as is the case in many developing countries. Recurring expenditures are funded by regular resources: central transfers, local taxes fees and charges, shared revenue, recurrent block grants, and earmarked taxes. Capital expenditures are budgeted and accounted for separately, though a lack of financial management skills in many countries do not clearly distinguish between the two types of expenditures. Maintenance of infrastructure and capital investments with longer-term returns are often deferred as expenditures are directed to projects with more immediate returns.

Mashreq

Some progress has been made in the past two decades to revise the structure and rules governing central transfers and central/local fiscal relations in certain countries, particularly in the Mashreq. Municipal development funds have been established and in many cases restructured to increase their effectiveness. Taxes collected at the central government level in Lebanon are distributed by a dedicated financial instrument known as the Independent Municipal Fund. The modernization of Lebanon's municipal finance system stands to benefit from recommendations that emerged from the World Bank's First Infrastructure Project, approved in 2000, and new distribution rules are being incorporated into a new decentralization law being drafted by a dedicated committee established by the Prime Minister.

In Jordan, the improvement of municipal finance is based on encouraging municipalities to formulate development plans, adopting a criterion of equity in the distribution of central grants to municipalities, setting up a financial management information system, and promoting the issuance of municipal bonds. Central transfers account for 40% of municipal revenues in Jordan, and another 14% come from loans from the Cities and Villages Development Bank (CVDB) (Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan 2013). The CVDB is a noteworthy and longstanding example in the region regarding transfers to local authorities that work directly towards service improvements. The bank's capital was raised from 25 million in 1996 to 50 million JD in 2002 and is capitalized by the central government (68%), the central bank of Jordan (2%), and the local councils themselves (30%) (CVDB 2015 & Batshon 2004).

The bank provides funding through loans in addition to technical and administrative expertise for infrastructure projects such as roads, sidewalks, libraries, public parks, solid waste equipment, etc. at an interest rate of 5%, and a maturity of 12 years with a two year grace period. Productive projects such as slaughterhouses, industrial and artisanal areas, parking lots, etc. access loans at an interest rate of 6% with the same maturity and grace year period. In 2004, infrastructure or service projects accounted for 86% of projects funded by the Bank, while productive projects accounted for the other 14%. Several municipalities are now indebted to the CVDB, which has prompted the central government to merge municipalities (reducing their number from 327 to 99), restructure them and dedicate JD 8.5 million to train staff and improve budgeting

procedures. The financial situation did improve through an increase in the share of municipalities in the fuel tax to 6% and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs paying off the outstanding debt (CVDB 2015 & UCLG Country Profiles).

Despite the economic separation of its territory and the challenges of the financial crisis in Palestine, exacerbated by cuts in international donor aid since 2010, Palestine’s Municipal Development and Lending Fund (MLDF), established in 2005, has achieved some progress towards enhancing municipal finance. The MDLF provides municipalities with grants to strengthen their financial management and build their creditworthiness to enable them to take out loans from the fund to finance local infrastructure and services. The long-term objective of the fund is to become the financial intermediary between local governments and the central government/donors in Palestine. The MDLF serves as a one-stop shop distributing funds to 134 municipalities through one channel, rather than a variety of donor and Palestinian Authority funding streams. Between 2005 and August 2012, the MDLF funded hundreds of small donor-financed projects in the amount of “\$US 126 million” for projects ranging from municipal infrastructure, capacity development, and other municipal activities. (MDLF 2013)

Maghreb

While transfers from the central government and locally generated revenues are the dominant sources of local government finances (61% and 25% respectively), borrowing for the construction of local improvements is on the rise and now accounts to 5% of local resources. Total municipal budgets in Morocco have shown a significant increase since 1996. Local taxation reform in 2007 through Law 47-06 unified and simplified to the local tax system and was accompanied by an improved organizational management framework that established local tax administrations (Kingdom of Morocco 2014). As of 2012, 52% of urban communes’ financing came from local taxation.

Figure 22: Financing of Territorial Communities (in thousands MAD)

	1996	2012
Local Taxation	4,165	10,200
State Transfers	5,650	23,300
Loans	585	1,996
TOTAL	10,400	35,496

Source: Kingdom of Morocco 2014

Municipal Development Funds established in the Maghreb include Morocco’s *Fonds d’Equiptment Communal* (FEC) and Tunisia’s *Caisse des Prêts et de Soutien des Collectivités*

Locales, which provide municipalities with long-term, low interest credit to finance revenue producing projects. While many Municipal Development Funds have been poorly managed or have not found financial sustainability, the FEC has gone through restructuring in recent years to overcome some of these shortcomings. With technical assistance from the World Bank, the FEC now finances a broad range of projects in which the local government may only be a partner. These include the development or rehabilitation of housing and the construction of wholesale and retail commercial centers, sports venues, and tourism related facilities. Loan terms can reach up to 15-years at an interest rate based on the central bank discount rate at the time the loan is approved but not less than 6.25%. The Fund's operations have grown relatively slowly, from a loan portfolio of US\$ 511 million in 2002 to US\$1,311 in 2013. In 2012, 56% of loans were issued for urban development purposes (FEC 2012).

GCC

Local governments in the Gulf are financed almost exclusively from central government transfers generated predominantly from oil revenues. While local authorities in Saudi Arabia may collect certain fees for advertising, building permits, and business registration, fee levels are set, collected, and redistributed by the Ministry of Finance (UN-Habitat 2012). Given their special status, the capital Riyadh and the holy cities of Mecca and Medina manage their own finances and have separate budgets. (UN-Habitat 2011). Borrowing among local authorities is limited except in Bahrain and Kuwait, which have established legal provisions for municipalities to take out loans in their constitutions (Adib 2008). Declining oil revenues in all countries will necessitate a re-examination of financing for municipal development.

Southern

States and the sub-state districts in Southern countries rely on a combination of unpredictable levels of financial transfers depending on national revenue and international donor aid, both of which have been significantly affected by the impacts of turmoil, civil war as in Yemen, or protracted conflict such as in Somalia and Sudan.

In Sudan, Greater Khartoum is home to 70% of Sudan's tax payers and 81% of taxes collected in Sudan are collected in the urban area of the capital (Abdalla 2008). In the current budget cycle, however, only half of Khartoum State's funding requests have been granted by the central government. The city is compensating for this shortfall through land sales.

Yemen's Local Authority Act of 2000 enabled municipalities to locally generate revenue from taxes, tariffs, and fees and receive central transfers for recurrent operating expenses, as well as central subsidies for capital investments (UCLG 2014).

In 2005, Somaliland's capital Hargeisa established a geographic information system (GIS) for the property taxation and planning purposes with technical support from UN-Habitat. The system has increased Hargeisa's property tax revenues from 169,062 USD in 2005 to nearly 700,000

USD in 2010 (UN-Habitat 2012). Municipal staff's ability to maintain and update the system has been a challenge and will require further capacity building and training to realize the potential contribution of the system in shoring up municipal revenue.

Providing adequate financing for the expanding scope of local responsibilities in Arab states requires changes in taxation policies and intergovernmental fiscal relations, the development of municipal credit markets to enable access to long-term credit, the rationalization of expenditure patterns, and the improvement of municipal financial management.

5.4 National Urban Policies and Spatial Planning

Most Arab countries have adopted national urban policies and growth strategies reflected in spatial urban development frameworks. A National Urban Policy, as defined and promoted by UN-Habitat consists of “a coherent set of decisions derived through a deliberate government-led process of coordinating and rallying various actors for a common vision and goal that will promote more transformative, productive, inclusive and resilient urban development for the long term” (UN-Habitat, 2014).

Such frameworks are reflected in the national policies Egypt to prevent the urbanization of valuable agricultural land, in the territorial master plans of the francophone Maghreb countries, or through a series of sectoral strategies, as is the case in Jordan. These frameworks have to integrate local priorities while providing the general orientation to ensure coherence and complementarities between national programs and local initiatives. In the Gulf countries, national urban policy formulation has been driven by the need to diversify their economies, primarily through investments in the knowledge economy and the associated territorial planning to facilitate this new sector, including the establishment of New Towns. In Southern countries lacking explicit national urban policies, a post-conflict period in the future could provide a much needed opportunity to conceptualize reconstruction and urban development in an integrated and mutually reinforcing way, as happened in Sudan. Stability and security, however, are necessary factors for a national consultation regarding any future vision of urban development.

Progress towards the attainment of livable, productive, and resilient cities has been disrupted by turmoil in 2011 and, in some countries including Syria, Libya, and Yemen, halted or even reversed as a result of protracted conflict and the destruction caused by the outbreak of war. In such uncertain and insecure situations the ability of national and local governments to develop realistic visions for the future has been eroded.

National urban policies and spatial strategies that exist in the Arab region combine Western spatial planning principles, combining models derived from the former colonial administrations, with local administrative and legal traditions. Challenges in the implementation of national urban policies are often encountered due to a lack of balance among development strategies at the

national or regional scales and the resources and implementing capacity, as well as the plans they have developed at the local level. However, the concept of economic development regions is increasingly being adopted and adapted to each country's special circumstances in the Maghreb countries and in Egypt. In 2005, Jordan explored the idea of regional councils within the governorates to coordinate plans and programs for the region and piloted the concept in Madaba before opting for decentralization to the governorates for political and social reasons (Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan 2014)

Environmentally sustainable urban development is an acute challenge in the primarily semi-arid North African and Middle Eastern region, which is the single most water stressed region in the world. The effects of climate change are anticipated to exacerbate the depletion of groundwater reserves by increasing the incidence and severity of drought. Decreases in precipitation threaten the ability of rural communities to sustain agriculture based livelihoods and will spur further rural to urban migration. While coastal cities have to seriously address the potential impacts of sea level rise forecasts, there is an urgent necessity in countries where cities historically grew along the rivers to draw urban development away from valuable agricultural land. This is best reflected in Egypt's urban policy since 1966 and exemplified in the case of Cairo, the region's only megacity. Interestingly, this situation has led to development strategies focusing on economic regions, gateways, growth poles, smart nodes, and development corridors. In this context, the spatial dimension of urban policy is an integral component of the strategic planning framework.

Mashreq

All countries in the Mashreq have an explicit national spatial strategy or a series of policy directives that together constitute a national urban policy framework. In Egypt, national planning and development regulations were amended and incorporated under a single law - Law 119/2009, which details the legal and institutional frameworks for planning and implementation including visions, strategic plans, and urban development plans at the national, regional and city levels. The Law also empowers local authorities to prepare structure and regional plans, though they can request assistance from the General Organization for Physical Planning, the central agency mandated with national and regional spatial planning.

The Directorate General of Physical Planning in the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works in Iraq has a similar mandate to develop national plans and partner with cities and regions to prepare their master plans. However, most plans have become outdated since the turmoil began in 2003 and were not updated given the security situation (Republic of Iraq 2014). Forced displacement disrupts natural urbanization patterns, prompting the Ministry to explore how to orient investments towards medium-size cities and to develop satellite cities that can absorb urban expansion in urban centers with spatial growth constraints.

National urban policies in Jordan and Lebanon have had to shift focus from guiding urban development under familiar circumstances, to dealing with a humanitarian crisis in their cities and towns, as well as its aftermath. Jordan embarked on its first comprehensive map of land uses in the Kingdom in 2006, which is currently being updated to account for the impacts of climate change. The Amman Greater Municipality undertakes all planning functions related to the capital and has recently completed the fifth Master Plan for the Amman metropolitan area (Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan 2014). In Lebanon, the Council for Development and Reconstruction was established in the post-war period and charged with national planning and urban master plan preparation. It produced the country's first physical master plan in 2005 to promote principles of sustainable, balanced development and heritage conservation through land use management.

In Palestine, the combination of spatial planning and various land regulations inherited from the mandate period, and overlays of regulations and physical barriers imposed through the Israeli occupation has created a framework that lacks the coherence needed for spatial planning of urban development.

Before the outbreak of armed conflict, Syria established the Higher Commission for Regional Planning in 2010 charged with formulating the National Framework for Regional Planning to address regional imbalances and disparities in development opportunities and growth potential. The Framework, prepared with UNDP support created a framework for spatial planning integrating the economic, social, and environmental dimensions. It identified development corridors and key projects to alleviate disparities and foster growth and job creation.

Maghreb

Recent national urban policies in Maghreb countries have tended to focus on the development and promotion of interior secondary cities to geographically balance economic opportunities across their territories. For the past two decades, the urban policies of Morocco, Tunisia and, to a lesser extent Algeria, have been marked by a strong political commitment to provide replacement housing to lower-income families in urban areas. Unrest in Libya has impeded the implementation of physical plans in the border regions of Tunisia and Libya's own urban development strategies developed by the central Urban Planning Agency, including the revised and expanded National Physical Perspective Plan (NPPP) 2006-2030. An important aspect of urban development in the Maghreb is the importance given to the spatial dimension of urban policies through a *Schéma National d'Aménagement du Territoire*.

With the objective of rebalancing the population and economic activities in the Algerian territory, increasing the attractiveness of the interior cities, and preserving the country's natural and cultural capital, Algeria's National Territorial Plan (SNAT) to the horizon 2030 defines eight specific programs regarding cities and urban development. These programmatic areas and objectives are common to many other SNATs in the region, and include encouraging economic growth poles along development corridors integrating industrial zones; sustainable resource use;

protecting and preserving cultural heritage; and rebalancing coastal development (Ministère de l'Intérieur et des Collectivités Locales 2006).

Morocco's current SNAT to the horizon 2025 gives 51 spatial and sectoral directives for development in the Kingdom, many of which deal specifically with urban territories. The spatial implications of urban growth require urban planning to address gaps in infrastructure and services, enforce building and construction regulations, reform housing policy, and leverage cultural patrimony for development, as has been done successfully in Fez. The SNAT also calls for a reshaping of urban patterns, being pursued through various new initiatives, such as the *Politique de la Ville*.

To translate the SNAT at the local level, *Schémas Régionaux d'Aménagement du Territoire* (SRAT) are developed by regional authorities and *Schema Directeur d'Aménagement Urbains* prepared at the local level with the support of dedicated ministries or directorates. Local and regional authorities have increasingly gained capacity and support to complete these plans, though much progress can still be made. Tunisia's new constitution mandates local authorities to prepare SDAUs before urban development projects can be approved. Mauritania's 2010 *Loi d'orientation* on urban planning provides the legal framework for the development of the national territorial policy. Article 18 of this new law, it is worth mentioning, calls for a participatory process in the development of the SNAT, including local authorities, private actors, and civil society (Republique Islamique de Mauritanie 2010).

All of the SNATs in the region are relatively up to date and countries such as Morocco have progressively amended the mandate and functions of its *Direction de l'Aménagement du Territoire* to anticipate territorial interventions rather than address challenges remedially. This entails supporting increasingly decentralized planning functions and ensuring coherence of public action in the different spheres of urban development and planning.

GCC

Urban policy in Saudi Arabia and national policy in the smaller city-states increasingly focus on the development of new knowledge centers to promote innovation and technology. They continue to promote economically productive urban areas and policies that guarantee access to land and housing for all their citizens. Many urban and national development policies also feature engagement with the private sector more prominently than in other sub-regions of the Arab world, which is not surprising given the wealth of the Gulf area and its attractiveness as a location for commercial, finance, and real estate investments.

Many of the smaller Gulf states have recently completed development strategies, which have a spatial dimension that guides the growth of their primary cities. These plans and strategies are often prepared in collaboration with large international firms. The Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning of Bahrain is the primary body responsible for national urban policy and completed the 2030 National Planning Development Strategy in 2007

while the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council For Planning And Development is the entity responsible for Kuwait's 2035 vision. The Supreme Committee for Town Planning of the Sultanate of Oman launched a process to develop the country's first National Spatial Strategy in 2010 while Qatar's high level of urbanization (99%) has made national development strategies and vision de facto urban policies (Freiland 2015). The Qatar National Vision 2030 was formulated in 2008 through a consultative process with Qataris representing the public, private, and civil society sectors, including women and youth (Qatar General Secretariat for Development Planning 2008). Urban and Regional Structure Plans to the horizon of 2030 have been prepared for Abu Dhabi (the capital), Al Gharbia, and Al Ain by the Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council in the United Arab Emirates, while Dubai's 2020 Urban Master Plan has been prepared by the Dubai Urban Planning Steering Committee in collaboration with foreign consulting firms (ADUPC 2015 and Dubai Municipality, Planning Department 2012).

Given Saudi Arabia's centralized administrative structure, the national urban strategy primarily vests responsibility for both strategic decisions and project implementation in the Ministry of Economy and Planning and the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs. The first National Spatial Strategy was developed in 2001 by the Deputy Ministry of Town Planning under the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and is under review. The strategy focuses on managing urban-rural linkages and recognizes the need to foster the role of small and medium sized cities in economic development and their capacity to balance population distribution through investments. Similarly to other spatial strategies in this arid and desert region, spatial configuration along infrastructure corridors is essential to integrated urban development across the country. However, the Kingdom does not have comprehensive law on spatial strategies, urban plans, and public participation, though the current spatial strategy did benefit from unofficial public consultations (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2014).

Southern

In the Southern countries, national urban policy is often integrated into national development policy. In the sub-region's federal systems, states or provinces are often charged with the development of regional, urban, and local plans, which are then approved by a central agency or ministry. Due to capacity constraints in Yemen that prevent local authorities from preparing plans, most of the work is still done by the recently established General Authority for Land Survey and Urban Planning (GALSUP) (Dabbas and Burns 2011). Turmoil beginning in 2011 however, had already begun to compromise the government's ability to formulate urban policies and implement programs. In countries where provinces have retained capacity to produce spatial and urban development plans, mechanisms to align these plans with national policies are needed to ensure coherent management of urban growth. Many countries in this sub-region however are currently experiencing conflict and turmoil that hinders the national cohesion necessary to formulate integrated national urban policies, such as in Somalia.

In Sudan's federal system, *wilayas* or states are entrusted with urban and rural planning. They prepare provincial structure plans, city master plans, and rural development plans. In an effort to enhance central coordination, the National Council for Physical Development (NCPD) was established in 1996 to oversee physical planning and development at the national level. Since its inception, the NCPD has enacted general planning directives that have led to the preparation of structure plans for state capitals and regional development plans in Khartoum, Gedaref, South Darfur, Northern, Blue Nile, and Kassala states. The NCPD is also preparing projects for urban observatories and a national sustainable urban development strategy (MEFUD and UN-Habitat 2014).

In the small states of Djibouti and Comoros, planning systems have developed based on French models. The urban agglomeration of Djibouti is currently in the process of updating its *Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme*, which was initially adopted in 2000. Current objectives focus on the growth of port and industrial activities to strengthen Djibouti's position as a gateway to east Africa while continuing to shift the demographic pressure to secondary cities (ADDS 2012).

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