

ARAB REPUBLIC OF SYRIA

**NATIONAL REPORT FOR HABITAT II
CONFERENCE
ISTANBUL , 1996**

URBAN MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME IN THE ARAB REGION

7/1

Within the Arab framework , which will be prepared by the Technical Secretariat of
the Council of Arab Ministers for Housing and Reconstruction.

I - INTRODUCTION

A - 1 Geographic Characteristics:

Syria is situated on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Area = 81.715 179 Hectares , agricultural lands , mountains and the (Bedwin Area).

Geographically it is divided into four regions each with different characteristics and climate:

- 1 - Coastal area
- 2 - Inland
- 3 - Badya (Bedwin Area)

A - 2 Demographic Characteristics:

Census in Syria:

3.5	million	in 1960
6.752	million	in 1970
9.046	million	in 1981
13.812	million	in 1994 when a housing survey was conducted as well.

The population increase during periods separating census processes , indicates that the annual population growth rate has decreased from 33.5 per thousand during 1970 - 1981, to 33.1 per thousand during 1981 - 1994.

Fertility rate = 4.2 according the 1993 national survey. It was 7.5 in 1960.

Crude mortality rate decreased from 15.3 per thousand in the Seventies to 8.2 per thousand in the Eighties.

Urban and rural population distribution for the years 1994 and 1981 is as follows:

Table 1

Year	Urban	Rural
1994	7,222,000	6,731,000
1981	4,256,543	4,789,601

The number of households in 1994 amounted to 2.244.438 while it reached only 1.442.217 in 1981.

A - 3 Economic Characteristics:

Syria basically depends on agriculture followed by industry. Agriculture contributed by 2% of the Gross Domestic Product GDP; Industry and mining activities contributed by 28% of GDP (1993) at the market prices (1985).

The agricultural sector contribution is lesser than the industry and mining sector owing to the presence of mineral resources. There is also an increasing reliance on the industry and mining as Syria is moving towards industrialization. There are tendencies towards increasing the effectiveness of the private sector in addition to encouraging Arab and foreign investments in the country.

A - 4 Social Characteristics:

Family forms the nucleus of the society in Syria, dominated by oriental traditions and religious and historical culture. Cases of marriage and divorce in Syria (social indicator).

Year	Cases	Marriage	Divorce	Crime
1993	Number	114,979	10,343	43,108
	Rate	8 per thousand	9%	2.82 per thousand

Syria witnesses social changes due to continuous rural migration towards urban centres.

A - 5 Cultural Characteristics:

- 1 - Ministry of Education.
- 2 - Ministry of Higher Education.
- 3 - Ministry of Culture and National Guidance.

The following table shows schooling levels in Syria:

1993	No. of Schools	No. of Students
Primary level	10079	2,573,181
Preparatory level	1413	667,962
Secondary level	81	181,568
Preparatory & Secondary level	886	

There are also technical institutes of all levels as well universities:

- Damascus University
- Aleppo University
- Al-Ba'ath University (Humss)
- Tishreen University (Latakia)

Cultural local and foreign centres are spread all over the districts offering all kinds of cultural services , as well as huge libraries such as Al-Asad library.

.II - Urbanization

The following table shows the rise in urban population over a 30 years period.

Table 4

Year	1960	1970	1981	1994
Percentage of urban population/ total population	36.9%	43.5%	47.0%	51.3%

Population growth is accompanied with the urbanization phenomena resulting from rural emigration towards urban areas and the rise in the population of cities. This led to the development of services and facilities:

- Water supply and the number of beneficiaries increased in Syria as is shown in the following table:

	1993	1994
Overall supply (1000m ³)	761 670	783 125
Net supply (1000m ³)	712 665	764 708
Consumption (1000m ³)	554 654	600 961
Percentage of beneficiaries (%)	76	77
Number of population (1000)	13 418	13 812
Per capita (litre/per day)	137 - 193	137 - 193

Number of households and population in the country and the agricultural land-owners according to 1981 census and preliminary results of 1994 census

Governorates	Households number		Population number in the country								no. of arable land-owners	
	1981	1994	1981				1994				1981	1994
			Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total				
Damascus (City)	199767	276791	574216	535215	1109431	724894	719244	1444138	5237	7502		
Damascus (country side)	145862	263344	471760	446791	918551	860854	822641	1683495	32371	41552		
Homms	124753	240557	415610	396809	812419	616933	597552	1214475	40107	49688		
Hamat	109889	164018	377538	359284	736822	558262	538818	1097180	51063	65373		
Tortous	69692	104247	228029	215138	443167	296784	286382	583166	42278	58105		
Latakia	89970	130977	283957	267551	551508	377811	363487	741298	36525	46399		
Idlib	91904	136229	295208	285232	580440	457087	445838	902925	46985	55273		
Aleppo	167512	272972	511987	473426	985413	808661	753731	1562392	5883	6965		
Rest of Aleppo	139941	206147	447675	444251	891926	701132	689355	1390487	80044	90099		
Al-Raqqa	53911	76325	178014	171834	349848	278526	271740	550266	21598	27163		
Dair-Alzour	57680	90248	206848	201509	408357	354308	352228	706536	29525	41495		
Al-Haskeh	101592	140045	336581	333033	669614	514476	503567	1018043	55162	59093		
Al-suwaida	34714	50108	99407	100177	199584	130501	137044	267545	15792	23764		
Dera'a	51028	85497	181596	181202	362798	300424	301005	601429	20857	31010		
Al-Qunaitra	4002	6933	13426	12840	26266	24642	24267	48909	2264	4363		
Total	1442217	2244438	4621852	4424292	9046144	7005385	6806899	13812284	485691	607844		

This is primarily followed by an increase in housing units from 620,000 in 1960 to 2,572,030 in 1994. The percentage of beneficiaries from services increased substantially.

III - Future Trends

Rapid urbanization is considered a basic problem that cities in Syria suffer from. It emburdens cities with is facilities in addition to waste of energies and potentials , environmental damage and transformation of cities into consuming rather that productive agglomerations. To address the results secreted by this phenomena, the following measures should be speedily undertaken:

- Regional planning (National): establishment of several production centres outside cities to create job opportunities.
- Improvement of living conditions in rural areas such as services , environment and life style .. etc.

Addressing Urbanization:

To take the effective measures to confront urbanization , it is essential to provide the planning and implementation prerequisites:

- Human side: provision of multi-disciplinary human expertise at the various areas and levels of work.
- Physical: clerical , stationary - transport.
- Technical - equipments - systems - information.
- Legislative: currently valid legislation should be rethought and revised according to needs with a view to assessing measures undertaken on a legal basis , and to facilitating and streamlining technical and administrative measures in terms of surveys , studies , planning , programming and implementation.
- Financial: establishing a suitable budget that will help in undertaking activities and implementing various services and investment projects and benefit from the grants, loans , regional and international assistance within the context of regional and international cooperation.

IV - First Part

1 - General Framework:

A - The Strategic Objectives of Urban Development and Housing:

Provision of shelter to all segments of the community through different plans and programmes with the contribution of the public , cooperative and private sectors to catch up with the natural population growth on one hand , and to face the results concomitant to rapid urbanization , forced migrations ensuing from wars and disasters on the other.

The following table illustrates the following: number of households and housing units according to the year.

Table 5

Year	1981	1994
Housing units No.	1,610,936	2,572,030
Households No.	1,442,217	2,244,438

B - Spread and Distribution of Housing Agglomerations (Syria):

The following table shows the total population number by regions , areas and densities:

Region	Population number (1000) in 1994 (p)	Area (1000) (hectares) (h)	General density
Coastal	1,523	419	3.634 p/h
Mountaineous/internal	2,417	5130	0.4711 p/h
Southern	3,964	2928	1.353 p/h
Northern	3,793	2460	1.517 p/h
Eastern	2,194	7601	0.2886 p/h

The development strategies aim at rectifying housing agglomerations distribution trends to reduce emigration towards urban centres. Consequently , this will extenuate the problems of rapid urbanization in addition to decreasing chances of spontaneous settlements formation in the main cities suburbs through:

1 - Improving housing environment and provision of basic and social services:

Syria seeks to improve the environmental conditions of spontaneous settlements and rural areas that are remote from city centres being the most successful means to put an end to population inflow into the cities and consequently the accompanying physical , social , services problems ... This is achieved through the provision of sewerage , potable water supply , electricity , telephone networks projects as well as social , health , educational and cultural facilities. Self-funding is mostly adopted along with regional and international assistance.

2 - Environmental safety:

While initiating development plans , care for environmental safety is taken into consideration in all its aspects along with avoiding water , air and soil pollution and preservation of green space , the agricultural ones as well as the those surrounding and included in (parks) housing agglomerations. A ministry concerned with the environment has been established which indicates the great attention focusing on this issue in any development plan ... environmental safety implies human safety.

1 -2 Current situation in all areas:

A - Population:

No. of population in Syria in 1994 - 13,812,284,

- annual population growth rate: 33.1 per thousand (1981 - 1994).

- Infant (child) mortality rate: 33%.

- Overall fertility rate: 4.8.

- Percentage of urban population 51.4%.

B - Housing:

Overall number of houses = 2,572,030 in 1994 out of which 2,111,539 houses are occupied. Number of households = 2,244,438.

Table 7

District	Housing number		Households
	Occupied	Vacant (under reinnovation)	
Damascus	246,282	54,278	276,791
Damascus country side	249,683	109,065	263,344
Homss	179,135	36,780	240,557
Hamat	158,162	30,925	164,018
Tartouss	103,570	29,291	104,247
Latakia	133,997	41,438	130,977
Idleb	129,873	28,290	136,299
Aleppo	842,219	70,698	479,119
Al-Raqqa	71,817	14,375	76,325
Dair Al-zour	88,010	13,087	90,248
Al-Haskeh	136,087	12,890	140,045
Al-suwaida'	48,308	9,076	50,108
Dera'a	38,738	8,435	85,497
Al-Qunaitra	6,658	1,863	6,933

It is noted from the above table that inspite of the fact that the number of occupied houses in some of the main cities is less than the households number , yet the overall number of houses may fulfill the needs of all the households if delivered and occupied on a timely basis , which indicates the housing sector's attempt to cope with the increase in the households number in Syria. This is but a translation of the Syrian housing policy.

Furthermore , spontaneous slums and settlements spread around the cities as a belt of poverty and desperation , which emburden housing activities , plans and programmes.

C - Infrastructure services:

Syria is covered by a road network in addition to a marine and air transport facilities as well as railways , to provide the population with the required services. The following 1993 statistics indicate:

-	Length of railways	= 36,377 Km.
-	Length of railways	= 23,412 Km.
-	Number of postal centres	= 626

There is still a need for development and expansion in this regard. What should be highlighted in the services field , is the establishment of treatment plants in most of the main cities.

Potable water facilities are available as the public governmental institutions in charge of these are to supply all houses with water without any difficulty. Attention is focused on the sufficiency , purity and safety of drinking water by taking preventive and remedial measures.

D - Social services:

1 - Education: refer to paragraph (A) (5) - cultural characteristics.

2 - Health: the following statistics show:

-	No. of private hospitals	= 210
-	No. of public hospitals	= 53
-	No. of pharmacies	= 4775
-	No. of beds	= 14698 or one bed per 911 persons
-	Medical doctors	= 6238 or one doctor per 2147 persons

In addition to health centres , illiteracy eradication centres spread in Syria at all levels.

E - Economic activities:

Syrian economy is essentially based on primary and secondary activities as seen from the contribution rates in the Gross National Product (GNP) , growth and growth increase rates of these activities in 1993.

Activity	Year	Contribution percentage	Growth rate
Agriculture	1990	28.5%	27%
	1993	31%	
Industry	1990	31.9%	16.3%
	1993	33.7%	
Internal and external trade	1990	16.2%	31% at fixed prices
	1993	19%	

1 - 3 Basic changes:

A - Economic:

Indicated here are some of the achievements in economic activities that caused basic changes in the structure of the national economy and the nature of production.

- 1 - Establishment of broad and developed infrastructure for economic and social development.
- 2 - Expansion of the productive basis in agriculture and industry taking into consideration development-inducing industry.
- 3 - Implementation and upgrading of services facilities such as banks and hotels.
- 4 - Implementation of many of private services projects throughout Syria. Arab emigrants investors are encouraged to invest in Syria , and promotion of the private sector particularly after the issuance of investment law (10) in 1991,

B - Social:

Family forms the basic social nucleus in Syria in addition to the continuous changes noticed in social relationships. The Syrian society is witnessing decrease in marriage cases and rise of average marriage age , which is attributed to urbanization rate in Syria and orientation of environment and social relationships towards an urbanized society.

The Government represented by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor , is undertaking the launching of plans and programmes to address the problems resulting from rapid urbanization (the social ones) in addition to sponsoring those with special needs and children of martyrs etc ...

C - Cultural:

The number of university and school graduates increased as well as the building of more school in villages and the suburbs. A larger number of Arab cultural centres and libraries are being built to fulfill the cultural needs in all the urban areas , which led to a rise in the cultural standard and a decrease in female illiteracy owing to the effort of concerned authorities particularly the Women's Association and the increase of fellowships abroad in addition to cultural protocols with friendly countries.

D - Services and Infrastructure:

Establishment of institutions and companies to supervise and implement in the services sector particularly water and electricity projects as well as upgrading existing ones such as treatment plants; focusing attention on transport , communications and storage along with production development. The Government is working on increasing the number of ships in the marine fleet and fostering the airways by modern crafts , along with the installation of telephone networks and lines and provision of telecommunications facilities with several countries and perhaps continents.

Cooperation exists with the United Nations Programmes to study spontaneous settlements, attending to their infrastructure and physical frameworks such as Urban Management Programme in the Arab Region and the Social and Economic Development Commission in the Arab Region and Europe (SEDARE).

E - Population :

Syria is witnessing a decrease in the population growth rate and in the mortality rate owing to the rise of cultural and health services standards which led to an increase in average life expectancy , decrease in overall fertility in addition to decrease in marriage cases.

F - Housing :

The increase of housing units is commensurate to population increase within the context of five-year plans to build more houses and attend to physical frameworks and spontaneous settlements to improve their physical , services and environmental aspects within local programmes as well as with international assistance such as the Urban Management Programme in the Arab Region , the Social and Economic Development Commission for the Arab region and Europe (SEDARE) as well as UNFPA.

1 -4 Assessment and results of current status:

A - Population: On the basis of population data and demographic indicators , the following is noted:

- 1 - Decrease in growth rate is but a positive evidence compared to the moderate prevailing growth rates. It is a positive indicator from the economic and services aspects.
- 2 - Decrease in child mortality rate and the general awareness and the attention given by the Government to health centres rendering services to all.
- 3 - Increase of rural migration rate to cities leading to the formation of spontaneous agglomerations that emburden services , resources and the environment. Therefore, necessary measures should be taken regarding these settlements , as they form the focus for negative housing indicators such as increase of population growth rate , among which are substandard health care and rise of mortality rate etc

B - Housing:

In spite of the urban construction projects to address population increase, yet the maldistribution of housing agglomerations, existence of spontaneous settlements, the need for funding, basic material and economic investment in land as well as the prevailing legislation, led to housing crisis in Syria. The means to overcome this crisis is by focusing attention on facilities, services and economic activities to prevent migration. In addition, there is a need to a rapid solution of spontaneous settlements, preparing the necessary plans for local funding of construction projects, and trying to get external assistance and revising legislations to encourage housing investment by occupying it and protecting it from speculation activities.

The urgent need for comprehensive national planning that ensures balanced population distribution with economic, geographical, administrative and social criteria should not be ignored.

C - Services and Infrastructure:

There are many plans and projects to cover Syria with transport and facilities networks (sewerage, electricity, potable water .. etc), building of new housing agglomerations and attempting to overcome the service problems resulting from rapid urbanization. Yet these projects need physical, financial and technical support to be able to increase the number of beneficiaries, and speed up achievement.

D - Economy:

Syria is upgrading its economic base through its private, cooperative and public sectors particularly the productivity. There is an increasing need for aid and loans that ensure continuity by establishing this base. Self-reliance is essential, the increasing reliance on the private sector, as well as the attempts at attaining hard currency and investment of remittances inside Syria. However these activities are in need for coordination to be set within a comprehensive national plan to promote national economy which goes hand in hand with social cultural and health development and the addressing of prospective problems.

1 -5 Identification of resulting complications:

Rapid urbanization results in pressures on facilities, services and resources as well as the environmental damage in the main cities.

Spontaneous settlements is a basic problem facing development plans. Efforts are exerted to address it through local plans and programmes and in cooperation with United Nations Programmes and to confront rapid urbanization and the accompanying results in addition to seeking benefit from international and regional assistance.

The development of the economic base is the premise in confronting the complexities ensuing from rapid urbanization along with dependence on national comprehensive urban planning and legislative modification and employment of modern information systems.

This requires promoting the qualifications and efficiency of workers within local and external training and rehabilitation plans benefiting from regional and international expertise.

1 - 6 Review and assessment of existing policies the fields of urban development and housing:

1-6-1 Decentralization in human settlement management:

Human settlements in Syria are managed by local councils that reach even to the villages level. These local councils deal with the current condition in each villages or residential area, setting of plans to follow-up housing developments where services projects are under implementation to fulfill the urban needs of the housing agglomerations relying on their local revenues in addition to community contributions to provide sustainable infrastructure.

This decentralization system ensures the launching of implementation plans and programmes in a way which is compatible with the circumstances of each housing agglomeration.

1-6-2 Urban Economy:

Urban economy in cities is based on industry , crafts and trade that fulfill the local needs in the country in addition to export. To address urbanization problem , plans are developed to upgrade the economic level in cities ; there are as well programmes implemented by local funding in cooperation with United Nations Programmes such as Urban Management Programme to encourage industries and handicrafts in these agglomerations surrounding the cities to ensure their stability and transform them from consuming communities that put strain on services and economy , into effectively productive ones.

The Ministry of Housing and Utilities in cooperation with the Ministry of Local Government, Handicrafts Union and the Chamber of Commerce seek through the Urban Management Programme to promote the economic conditions in spontaneous settlements.

1-6-3 Housing finance and targeted groups:

Housing projects are funded by:

- 1 - The public sector contributing by 25% of the total housing projects basically aiming at providing shelter to low-income groups.
- 2 - The private sector which contributes by 65% of the total housing projects aiming at the provision of housing in general.
- 3 - The cooperative sector contributing by 10% of the total housing projects aiming at facilitating access to housing by the low-income groups.
- 4 - The communal sector which contribution is not worth mentioning in housing projects , aiming at facilitating access to housing by the low-income groups.

1-6-4 Effectiveness of the role of women and the social groups:

Women contribute in the various social segments in all development plans through the public , private , cooperative , communal sectors and unions where efforts of these groups are coordinated to contribute effectively in development plans.

The role of women has developed effectively in Syria , and they are being represented in the Government , parliament , local councils in addition to executive sectors. Women along with the other social groups contribute in dealing with the economic and social problems Syria is facing within development programmes (household enterprises).

1-6-5 Improvement of the urban environment:

The safety of infrastructure and services such as sewerage networks , potable water , electricity , postal centres helps in improving the urban environment in addition to the spread of green spaces gardens-parks and service facilities in all residential areas. This should be accompanied by caring for arable and green areas surrounding residential agglomeration and those integrated in them. The community members should be made aware of the necessity of caring for the safety of these utilities as well as their continuous and repeated maintenance , refraining from vandalism or violation for personal purposes or out of negligence.

Special attention is focused on spontaneous settlements as they form unsafe phenomena in the organizational structure , therefore development in these areas is considered an environmental one also.

1-6-6 Confronting disasters by civil defence activities:

Syria does not enjoy a remarkable degree of capacities and expertise in confronting natural disasters , but it is capable of improving the available capabilities as Syria has never undergone natural disasters except of those pertaining to war.

V - Second Part:

2 - 1 Objective and basic principles of the Plan and the indicators of its achievement:

A - The general objectives of housing activity:

- 1 - Provision of necessary housing for all groups especially for the low-income ones.
- 2 - Provision of laborers-housing (industrial settlements) close by the factories and industrial areas and popular housing in the residential suburbs.
- 3 - Provision of housing for professionals , university professors etc...
- 4 - Provision of all basic services and amenities as well as social facilities including job opportunities in the economic field.

- 5 - Ensuring the environmental safety: soil , water and air ... making sure that it is far from various pollution factors and sources and revising legislation , building codes and systems and land-use.

These objectives are being achieved as the State is proceeding with the provision of housing for workers close to factories (industrial settlements completed in A'dra -Aleppo etc...). It is seriously working on the provision of housing for all citizens through the private , public and cooperative sectors. The indicator being comparing the number of houses to the number of households according to table (5). The data there shows the balanced number which is an indicator of total sufficiency , although there are some factors that render housing inaccessible to certain low-income social segments.

B - The basic principles of the Plan:

- 1 - Adoption of scientific basis in setting plans.
- 2 - Use of modern tools and techniques and basic data systems.
- 3 - Pursuing advanced methods in implementing these plans.
- 4 - Reliance on the general contribution in implementing these plans.
- 5 - Adoption of sustainable development methods.

2 - 2 The general framework of the Plan:

The plan involves the building of housing units in all residential agglomerations that witness population increase with the provision of basic services in most of the Syrian cities in addition to caring for spontaneous settlements spread in cities ... aiming at strategic objectives.

- Provision of housing to all income-groups.
- Improvement of residential environment for the existing settlements as well as the provision of all infrastructural and social services.
- Caring for the safety of the environment.
- Self-reliance and dependance on national resources in implementing plans.

2 - 3 Policies and Implementation Mechanisms:

The five-year plans law involved the following policies and measures:

- (a) Revising and rethinking of the prevailing laws and legislations in the housing field and taking the necessary measures to implement them in a way that ensures impartiality.

- (b) Strengthening of the public and cooperative sectors to enable them to build houses according to what was set in the five-year and annual plans.
 - (c) Implementation of legislation and statements issued regarding the completion of incomplete buildings.
 - (d) Observing the technical and health conditions in building houses in a way that leads to the provision of adequate and comfortable housing.
 - (e) Diversity of building materials according to their availability in the areas on which housing is locally built.
- Provision of all basic , services , commercial and entertainment amneties in modern residential areas.
 - Provision of private land for urban expansion part of these policies has been achieved while some are still to be implemented. Others are facing obstacles that impede their achievement ... thus forming a subject to be treated.

2 - 4 Implementation Priorities (the three public , private and cooperative sectors participate in presenting priorities):

Building houses for the homeless and the environmental improvement for the existing housing areas including the spontaneous settlements , are considered of top priority regarding construction and development plans. This is followed by building of houses in a way that goes in line with population growth , in addition to the priority given to the supply of infrastructural services as housing is useless in the absence of those services and cosideration of environmental safety and sustainable projects. This is achieved by the commitment to periodical implementation programmes in sanitation , maintenance , rennovation and expansion in order to overcome all chances to loss of the facilities effectiveness , but instead being able to achieve effectiveness and serve the majority of the population.

2 - 5 Time-Table for Implementation:

In its developmental process , Syria adopts the five-year plans mechanism to implement economic , social and housing policies. These five-year plans are translated into annual plans , being implemented within specific time-tables defined in accordance with the size and nature of development projects in Syria. In addition , an assessment is conducted to the time-programme during implementation after the specific period of the plan passes álong with progressive annual (and quarterly assessment through implementation).

2 - 6 Assesement and Follow-up Mechanisms:

Statistical data are issued every now and then involving economic , services and construction activities in Syria indicating the portion being implemented from the five-year plan. Specialized committees and councils concerned with the plans implementation and assesement at the projects level , local and central levels to undertake analysis and assesement of what has been implemented , as well as formulating recommendations for rectification and follow-up purposes up until the end of the plan.

VI - Third

Review of certain cases viewed as important by the State and should be incorporated in the preparatory process for Habitat II.

3 - 1 Regional Planning:

Regional planning protects residential agglomerations from emigration effects and strain on services and energy sources as well as protecting the agricultural product and the provision of population stability factors in arable lands. Syria is considered in a phase where the need is urgent for formulating a comprehensive regional plan through addressing problems and results of rapid urbanization and even the absence of comprehensive planning. In spite of the serious concern to face these results particularly spontaneous settlements, in cooperation with the United Nations Urban Management Programme, there is an urgent need to document data and information on human settlements in general and Damascus in particular by remote control system and the Geographical Information Systems.

3 - 2 New Residential Areas:

New residential areas are being planned to be built accompanying the increasing demand on housing in Syria owing to population growth. It is preferable to set these new residential areas within comprehensive plans at the country's level to be properly beneficial and to establish the necessary facilities independently, far from the existing communities so that they will not form further burdens on the existing communities services as is the case in spontaneous settlements, and help in environmental safety and conservation.

3 - 3 Upgrading and Protection of Cultural and Historical Sites and Buildings:

Syria is considered a wealth of cultures and civilizations. There are legislations and programmes that aim at upgrading ancient housing preserving the historical sites and caring for their repair and restoration and conserve their cultural characteristics by exerting local efforts with the assistance of international initiatives as is the case in the old city of Damascus renowned for its cultural and historical dimensions as well as services and structures.

3 - 4 Upgrading Deteriorated Areas by Self-Help Efforts:

There are several projects and programmes designed for upgrading deteriorated areas by self-help efforts, some of which have been upgraded such as Al-Qunaitara project for sheltering refugees from Al-Qunaitara; some programmes are being implemented such as urban development programme in cities as is the case of Tabbala and Duwalaa areas which are of Damascus slums, and the (SEDARE) programme in Bustan Hasshas which is one of the spontaneous settlements in the fringes of Damascus.

3 - 5 Upgrading of Underserved Areas (spontaneous):

There is a prevailing trend in Syria to address the spontaneous settlements phenomena to curb their impact. Each governorate collects information and conducts surveys to use in spontaneous settlements. Multi-faceted studies are being carried out to form the approach for upgrading and improving urban conditions and services facilities and infrastructure particularly water , electricity and sewerage networks as well as improving the physical structure through self-reliance in addition to externally available assistance in order to speed up rational confrontation and to make these settlements as similar as possible to the urban fabric , and to put an end to their effects and their spread .. to reach an irreparable phase.

3 - 6 A Demonstration for facing non-existent (imaginative) disasters:

Fourth:

Technical and financial assistance from the international community and benefit from local expertise.

4 - Local Level:

4 - 1 Projects:

Syria has infrastructural and social projects involving water , electricity , health , social; These projects are implemented by self-help efforts and local financial support though these lack certain techniques and equipments to be achieved in accordance to the required specifications. In addition , financial assistance contribute in making these projects capable of fulfilling the needs of the largest numbers of beneficiaries as well as speeding their implementation.

4 - 2 Local Studies by the Specialized Concerned Authorities (Ministry of Housing and Utilities the General Company for Studies and Technical Consultations): In the field of urban development generally as the need is urgent particularly for spontaneous settlements. There are also studies conducted by some United Nations Programmes in the context of (SEDARE) (Social and Economic Development Commission for the Arab Region and Europe) Programme for the Bustan and Hasshas study and the Urban Development Management Programme in Taballah and Dwaitaa area study in addition to benefit from certain external financial assistance and technical expertise at the regional and international levels and from common Arab ones.

4 - 3: Reliance on Arab urban information networks in the context of protocols and programmes implemented among Arab States to exchange mutual expertise according to the need , to establish a network to exchange information on common projects in the field of urban development , as well as achievement of housing and environment strategies that pertain to each of the Arab countries to ensure accurate and speedy information transfer.

4 - 4 Establishment of a Fund for financing urban development in the Arab Countries:

Arab countries currently in all individual and common development projects are in urgent need for the establishment of a fund for financing development projects easily with a view to addressing the current crises particularly the housing and the population ones.

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