



United Nations

— HABITAT III —

SIDE EVENT REPORT

Submitted by Lead Organization	
Name of the lead organization	League of Arab States; Environment, Housing, Water Resources and Sustainable Development Department
City and country where the lead organization is based	Cairo, Egypt
Title of the event	Towards an Arab Urban Agenda
Date	10/20/2016
Room number	Room 14
List of partner organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNESCWA: Beirut, Lebanon; • UN-Habitat/ ROAS: Cairo, Egypt; • Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities: Cairo, Egypt; • Minister of Public Works and Highways, Yemen; • Higher Council for Planning and Development, Kuwait.
Number of attendees	21-40
Percentage of women participating	41-50%
Background information on the event (themes, issues, context).	<p>The side event outlined the key challenges the Arab region is facing with regard to housing and sustainable urban development, and addressed the prospects and opportunities for the implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda, particularly the Sustainable Development Goal 11 "make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" and the New Urban Agenda. Following the discussions on the Arab Urban Agenda during the Third Preparatory Committee Session, the League of Arab States alongside its respective partners focused on discussing and elaborating the localization in the Arab region following the HABITAT III summit. It aims to advocate for the implementation of the Arab Strategy for Housing and Sustainable Urban Development 2030 among Arab constituencies and agree on a way forward with regard to a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for implementation of SGD11 and other urban targets as well as the New Urban Agenda in the Arab region.</p>



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Concise summary of the event proceedings, including key points discussed

• The Arab Strategy for Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, adopted by LAS in 2016, will serve to implement the New Urban Agenda in the Arab region. Its implementation action, under development, will be reviewed every two years and amended based on lessons learned. Partnerships are vital for better synergy among relevant stakeholders and optimization of available resources. LAS will act as the regional umbrella to coordinate between Arab countries and capitalize on existing capacities. • The Political conflict in Yemen is contributing to the urban deterioration of the country and hampering any efforts to implement the Arab Strategy for Housing and Urban Development. In this regard, local authorities should be at the forefront of emergency response, through decentralized governance systems to facilitate their tasks, especially during the post-conflict reconstruction, with the assistance of international agencies and foreign donors (capacity-building and financial support). Community engagement is currently helping in recently liberated cities (Mukalla) and would be key mean for municipalities to reach the most affected social groups. • The Regional Office for Arab States of UN-Habitat provides technical support to LAS and Arab countries to meet the growing demand for affordable housing and address social inequalities and other urbanization challenges in the Arab region. It assisted in the development of the Arab Strategy for Housing and Sustainable Urban Development 2030 and the establishment of AMFHU, hosted by Government of Egypt. It is also currently initiating a number of regional multi-country projects, to share experiences and peer-to-peer learning (National Urban Policies, Public Spaces – in preparation, and Migration) among relevant Arab partners. • UN-ESCWA is committed for the implementation of the NUA, as a follow up for the SDGs. The NUA encompasses essential concepts (inclusive cities, right to the city, municipal finance) to confront the urban challenges of the Arab region. Based on ESCWA previous experiences with other UN and regional agencies, further collaboration with LAS and UN-Habitat is essential to develop a concrete implementation mechanism/secretariat to work with Arab national governments and address their diverse specificities. A potential pilot plan could be to focus on five countries in an initial stage for the implementation of the NUA. • In Kuwait, the formulation of a National Urban Policy is necessary to ensure adequate urban governance. Along with that, Kuwait is shifting its oil-dependent economy more renewable and sustainable energy resources and green technologies. It is also assisting the humanitarian efforts of conflict-affected Arab countries. On another note, the Arab region has unexploited resources such as the “Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development” that can be mobilized, in parallel with exchange of urban good practices and experiences between Arab countries.



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Recommendations that emerged from these discussions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further collaboration between UN agencies, regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders is inevitable for an effective implementation of the Arab strategy for Housing and Urban Development 2030, and hence, the New Urban Agenda in the Arab region. • Capacity building of local authorities is vital for better urban governance, especially in conflict and post-conflict countries. • Resources mobilization at the national and regional levels can assist in initiating activities in the framework of the implementation of the NUA. • Peer learning and exchange of practices will help to strengthen and coordinate efforts of Arab countries with regards to the future urban development of the region. • Community engagement in the planning and implementation of activities at the local level can increase the sustainability of their impacts.
Partnerships or collaborations that emerged from the event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAS, UN-ESCWA and UN-Habitat are planning to sign a Memorandum of Understanding for joint implementation and monitoring of SDGs and the New Urban Agenda in the Arab region
Name, nationality, title and organization of the 1st speaker at your event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Maeen Saeed, Yemeni, Vice Minister of Public Works and Highways - Yemen
Name, nationality, title and organization of the 2nd speaker at your event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shahira Wahbi, Sudanese, Chief of Natural Resources Sustainability and Regional and International Coordination, League of Arab States (LAS)
Name, nationality, title and organization of the 3rd speaker at your event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dyfed Aubrey, British, Director (a.i.), UN-Habitat Regional Office for Arab States
Name, nationality, title and organization of the 4th speaker at your event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imane El-Nasser, Kuwaiti, Deputy Secretary General of High Council for Planning and Development - Kuwait
Name, nationality, title and organization of the 5th speaker at your event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed Al-Ganahy, Kuwaiti, Senior Consultant with High Council for Planning and Development - Kuwait
Dissemination of the outcomes of your event?	<p>Outcomes of the event were published on the Un-Habitat Arabic website and FB page and will be available on the English version shortly. Arabic: http://ar.unhabitat.org/towards-arab-urban-agenda/</p>