



المؤتمر العام السابع عشر لمنظمة المدن العربية



استشراف مدن المستقبل:
إثراء صناعة الابتكار والمعرفة
المناخ 2016/5/30-29



17th General Conference of Arab Towns Organization

ESCWA/ATO Regional Side Event on “Promoting Knowledge and Innovation for Inclusive and Sustainable Urban Development in the ArabRegion”

Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain
30 May 2016

Introduction:

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, together with the Arab Towns Organization(ATO) are organizing a regional side event during the latter’s 17th General Conference under the topic: “Promoting Knowledge and Innovation for Inclusive and Sustainable Urban Development in the Arab region”, the side event will be held at 11:15 hrs. to 13:15 hrs., on 30 May 2016, within the general framework of the 17th General conference of ATO (Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, 30 May 2016). The cooperation between ESCWA and ATO in organizing this event is a natural translation of a long standing cooperation between the two organizations in responding to regional challenges arising from rapid urbanization, and specifically those relating to rapid increases in urban poverty, marginalization, slums, depletion and overuse of resources and environmental deterioration and increase in wars, civic strife, refugees, migration and displacement.

These challenges necessitate the design and adoption of various strategies, plans and programmes to address them targeting to achieving inclusive and sustainable urban development, founded on rights, and to provide prosperity, security and inclusive human development to the populations of the region, while fostering resilience to the societies and environmental sustainability at the same time.

The growing challenges accompanying rapid urbanization call for collective action at national, regional and global levels to ensure that cities continue to promote economic growth and prosperity for their inhabitants in an environmentally sustainable manner. Adequate rules and regulations need to be put in place to ensure accessibility and equality of access. Urban design should prioritize equality of access for all and provide citizens with smooth accessibility to the means of production as well as the exchange of goods and services in an efficient and optimal manner. Systematic efforts should continue to be made to ensure that basic urban services are provided to all urban dwellers, bearing in mind that the unit cost of service provision tends to be lower in concentrated urban areas than in dispersed rural ones.

In an effort to render cities more inclusive and optimize their role as drivers of economic growth and social development, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is working with various national, regional and global partners to formulate a new urban vision, which is not only fully inclusive but also sustainable, resilient and safe.

The United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (H III) will be held in Quito, Ecuador, in 2016. The aim of which is to encourage United Nations member States to adopt a new global urban agenda and reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable urbanization. This new agenda will build on the Habitat Agenda issued at Habitat II, held in Istanbul in 1996, which emphasized adequate shelter for all, with the notion of sustainable human settlements driving development in an urbanizing world. In an inclusive and participatory process, H III will attempt to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable urban development, assess progress achieved over the last two decades and identify new and emerging challenges and agree on implementation plans.

H III will offer a unique opportunity to discuss the important challenge of how cities, towns and villages are planned and managed, and their role as possible drivers of sustainable development. The new urban agenda to be considered and adopted is expected to go well beyond the 1996 Habitat Agenda by addressing the new urban challenges facing the world. It will make use of developments in technology and accrued knowledge, and will promote a new model of urban development that integrates all facets of sustainable development to foster equity, welfare and shared prosperity, and addresses the means to mobilize the global community to achieve these goals. With suitable policies and the necessary commitments and actions agreed upon at the national, regional and global levels, cities and towns can act as effective and efficient drivers of sustainable economic and social development.

These same goals of inclusion, resilience, safety, prosperity and sustainability are of paramount significance to Arab cities and the Arab region as a whole, which is urbanizing at a very rapid pace. In 2010, the population of Arab countries was 357 million, 56 per cent of whom lived in cities; by 2050, these countries will be home to 646 million people, 68 per cent of whom will live in cities.¹ The urban population in Arab countries grew by more than four times from 1970 to 2010 and will more than double again between 2010 and 2050. As such banking on successful urban development to have more inclusive, resilient, sustainable, safe and prosperous cities could pose a fundamental mean to achieve development of the Arab societies and guarantee its resilience, and sustainable prosperity

ESCWA and the UN-Habitat Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS), in cooperation with the League of Arab States, and other regional organizations including ATO, are leading the regional preparations for Habitat III. These preparations include a set of regional consultative processes to identify urbanization trends, challenges and development priorities to be able to inform the global H III preparatory process and to contribute to the new Sustainable Urban Development Agenda which will be adopted at HIII Conference.

Objectives and Themes:

The side event will provide an opportunity to inform the participants on the ongoing regional preparations for HIII which will be held in Ecuador, Quito in October 2016. It will also inform on the main regional messages which will be communicated to the global process, which resulted from a consultative process. It will also target to deepen the consensual agreement on these priority urban development areas which were identified, and agree on the issues which should be reflected in the New Urban Development Agenda. The side event will also address some aspects relating to ensuring inclusive and sustainable urban development, including use of knowledge and innovation and will provide a platform to introduce some country experiences.

The main themes of the side event will address the following:

¹ UN-Habitat, *The State of Arab Cities 2012/2013: Challenges of Urban Transition*, Kenya, UN-Habitat, 2012, p. xiii. Available from www.unhabitat.org/jo/en/inp/Upload/134359_OptiENGLISH_StateofArabCities_Edited_25_12_2012.pdf.

- Present the main consultative activities assumed by ESCWA and partnering regional organizations in preparation to H III;(ESCWA)
- Present the main themes, and regional messages to be shared with the global H III process; (ESCWA)
- "Use of knowledge and innovation to overcome the challenges of reconciliation, restitution and the development of inclusive and sustainable cities";(ESCWA)
- Invigorating innovation and knowledge in urban development and housing- selected experiences.

Side Event Agenda:

“Promoting Knowledge and Innovation for Inclusive and Sustainable Urban Development in the Arab Region” Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain 30 May 2016; @ 11:15-13:15 hrs	
11:15	Welcome and opening remarks; Chair: Ms. Gisela Nauk; Chief, Inclusive social Development Division(ISDS) /Social Development Division(SDD)/ Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia(ESCWA)
11:20	Cconsultative activities assumed by ESCWA and partnering regional organizations in preparation to H III; Ms. Naela Haddad, First social Affairs Officer, ISDS/SDD/ESCWA
11:35	Main themes, and regional messages to be shared with the global H III process; Ms. Gisela Nauk; Chief, ISDS/SDD/ESCWA
11:50-12:50	Invigorating innovation and knowledge in urban development and housing - selected experiences:
11:50	Kingdom of Bahrain experience;
12:05	Saudi Future Cities Project; Dr. Abdul Rahman Al Shaikh, Deputy, Ministry of Urban Planning –Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
12:20	New Cairo- Administrative Capital; Eng. Nafisa Hashem, chief of Sector at Ministry of housing and communities, Arab Republic of Egypt.
12:35	Use of knowledge and innovation to overcome the challenges of reconciliation, restitution and the development of inclusive and sustainable cities.

	Mr. Philippe Chite; Team Leader for the Reconstruction and Economic Recovery -The National Agenda for the Future of Syria at ESCWA;ESCWA
12:50	General discussion Moderator: Ms. Nauk
13:10	Closing remarks

Time and Venue:

The side event will start at 11:15 am and will convene for two hours, on Monday the 30th of May 2016 at Diplomat Radisson Hotel, in Manamah, Kingdom of Bahrain.

Language:

The language of the meeting is Arabic with direct interpretation to English and Arabic.

Visas and other logistical information:

For further information kindly contact Ms. Haddad for substantive issues or Ms. Hussien for logistics. Below are their respective addresses:

<p>Naela Haddad United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia UN House P.O. Box: 11-8575 Riad El Solh 1107-2812, Beirut, Lebanon T. +961 1 978 460 F. +961 1 981 510 haddad8@un.org www.unescwa.org</p>	<p>Ms. Jinan Hussein Arab Towns Organization</p> <p>Tel: +96524849705, ext. 106 Fax: +96524816548 Email: j_hussein@ato.net Email: magazine@arabtowns.org</p>
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