ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA (ESCWA)

BRIDGING THE URBAN DIVIDE IN THE ESCWA REGION: TOWARDS INCLUSIVE CITIES

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Executive summary

The countries of the ESCWA region are confronted by numerous urban challenges that are associated with widening divisions and gaps between different groups and geographic locations. This report is mainly concerned with the spatial dimension of the urban divide and the kind of spatial development interventions that are taking place in the region vis-à-vis strategies aimed at inclusive urbanization, social equity and economic balance.

On the basis of existing empirical data, the report sheds light on the multiple forms of polarization that can be observed at the regional, national, city and intercity scales. This polarization is manifested, among other things, in the form of national and transnational migratory flows from less developed to more developed areas where job opportunities are concentrated; the polarization of the urban population in terms of income level and the ability to access basic urban and social services, and enjoy decent living conditions and formal employment opportunities; and the spatial stratification of urban areas on the basis of income, ethnicity or place of origin.

With reference to case studies and examples, the report also highlights the following: (a) the array of spatial development strategies that the countries and cities of the region are adopting in order to bridge existing inequalities and promote balanced national development and inclusive urbanization; and (b) the gaps that exist between the good intentions voiced in national policies and the actual urban planning and development practices taking place on the ground. In this regard, the report stresses that an entrepreneurial style of planning in the region is widening spatial divisions and social inequalities. It also examines the kind of "structural obstacles" that exist at different levels of policymaking and implementation, and which are eventually contributing to the fragmentation of current spatial interventions and to reducing the effectiveness of good initiatives.

Finally, the report outlines a framework for action primarily aimed at institutionalizing inclusive development within spatial planning policy formulation and implementation. One of the key messages that emerge in this context is that spatial development can accentuate existing inequalities and divisions when left to the private sector and market forces alone. As such, the proposed framework emphasizes the need for governments to re-assume a central role in guiding and leading urban development processes. At the same time, the framework stresses that spatial intervention is not the exclusive purview of national governments. Hence, it emphasizes the need for collective action that involves the State, the market and civil society; good governance on the principles of subsidiarity and participation; and integrated spatial, economic and social development processes.

Introduction

1. *The urban divide and the right to inclusive cities*

The "urban divide" is a metaphoric term that stands for the cleavages and growing inequalities that exist within our cities and societies, and represents one of the major paradoxes of our times. Indeed, as the number of people living in urban areas has crossed the threshold of 50 per cent, and is projected to reach 70 per cent in 2050, cities across the world are becoming hubs of complexities and contradictions. On the one hand, they are the centres of wealth and the engines of economic opportunities and growth. On the other hand, they are often stricken with poverty and deprivation. The "urban advantage" that most people seek in cities is available only to those who are able to access adequate housing, social services and job opportunities. However, for a large number of urban dwellers the advantage of a city location is never realized owing to gaping urban inequalities and steep invisible barriers.

Particularly in the cities of developing countries, the uneven development and unequal ability of the urban population to access available opportunities are widening the socio-economic gap between the rich and the poor and, moreover, are excluding the great majority of vulnerable urban dwellers, including migrant workers and refugees, from their "right to the city". This is manifested in the proliferation of informal settlements and economic activities, and in the significant cost and impact of non-inclusive urban development policies on human health and the natural and built environment.

In general, the unprecedented pace and scale of urban population growth has outstripped the fiscal and technical capacity of many governments to build and expand urban infrastructure, deliver basic urban services, and ensure adequate shelter and services for all. This problem is often exacerbated by the failure of central governments to decentralize revenue-raising to the municipal level. Such fiscal, institutional and managerial gaps are partly responsible for the inability of municipal authorities to tackle key urban challenges effectively. At the same time, the urban divide and high level of urban inequalities can be attributed to weak urban governance, systemic institutional dysfunction and inadequate urban social policies that do not fully address the needs of the urban poor.

Hence, the division that characterizes many cities in the developing world today is multidimensional: spatial, social, economic, political and cultural. In fact, there are many urban divides, including, among others, income divide, educational divide, gender divide, quality-of-life divide and level-of-attainment divide. Moreover, spatial and social inequalities exist both within cities and between cities of the same country and are often more pronounced with rapid economic growth, which tends to be geographically concentrated in certain areas.

Globalization forces and free-market policies have also deepened existing inequities and intercity gaps. Especially in large cities, globalization processes and national and transnational migration have generated "multiple forms of polarization" and set the conditions for the creation of new urban divisions on the basis of class, income and racial/ethnic origin.[1]

2. *Bridging the urban divide*

The concentration of services and opportunities in urban areas certainly gives cities an advantage over rural areas in terms of addressing poverty issues, provided that pro-poor policies and institutional mechanisms are in place. In other words, unless serious action is taken to address the growing economic, social, political and cultural inequalities, the disparity between the "haves" and the "have-nots" will broaden in many cities across the world.

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[1] S. Sassen, "The Global City: Strategic Site/New Frontier", which is available at: http://www.india-seminar.com/2001/503/503%20saskia%20sassen.htm (last accessed on 6 May 2011).

Clearly, the issues that need to be addressed vary in scale and intensity from country to country. Generally speaking, however, the unprecedented increase in urban population and urban poverty rates require that central and local governments address several interrelated challenges, notably: (a) demographic challenges associated with rapid urbanization; (b) economic and financial challenges, including the "fiscal gap" faced by municipalities; (c) social challenges partly associated with lack of access to basic urban services, housing and employment opportunities; (d) urban environmental challenges; (e) spatial challenges related to urban fragmentation and segregation; and (f) political or institutional challenges linked to good governance, participation and basic rights to the city.

Contemporary literature and policy debates effectively address these challenges and identify mechanisms for bridging urban inequality and promoting more inclusive cities. Under the broad framework of "The Right to the City – Bridging the Urban Divide", the fifth session of the World Urban Forum (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 22-26 March 2010) and UN-Habitat's *State of the World's Cities 2010/2011* have most recently stimulated a wide debate that engaged academics, urban development experts, government officials, mayors, civil society and the private sector on the challenges associated with rapid urbanization, uneven development and social inequalities.[2] Often, the critical components to building inclusive cities have been cited to include comprehensive and integrated urban development strategies that respond to increased demands for affordable housing, basic services and infrastructure, education and health services, decent and fair employment, and environmental protection.

Recent development studies and policy research also stress the need to approach urban challenges as part of broader and inclusive development agenda that integrates the following: (a) lagging and leading provinces within a country; (b) urban and rural areas; and (c) slums and informal settlements with other parts of the city. In addition, a successful approach to spatial and socio-economic integration needs to strike a balance between the following: (a) spatially-blind (or universal) social and economic policies to improve the living standards for all; (b) spatially connective policies based upon infrastructural investments to facilitate the movement of services, goods and people; and (c) spatially targeted programmes and interventions.[3]

Above all, the objective of bridging the urban divide and promoting inclusive cities requires political commitment to pro-poor development policies; equitable distribution of public services and available resources; and the promotion of greater participatory democracy and cultural diversity in cities.

3. *Scope and objectives*

Clearly, the intensity of urban problems and the competing interests of the many urban groups require central governments and city authorities to revisit their urban planning and management strategies in ways that reduce inequalities through better urban governance practices. There are numerous examples that show that it is indeed possible to bridge the urban divide through better urban planning and management systems, and more responsive spatial interventions. The experience of Porto Alegre (Brazil), Bangalore (India) and some other cities in Latin America and Asia are cases in point.

The presentation of successful (or promising) international experiences is, however, a vast project that goes beyond the scope of this report. The report mainly addresses the challenges faced by the member countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), and the policy responses of the governments in the region to growing urban inequalities and social divisions. More specifically, this report is concerned with the spatial dimension of the urban divide and the kind of spatial development

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[2] These issues were discussed at the World Urban Forum V within the broad framework of "Right to the Inclusive City", which brought together Government officials, mayors, civil society and the private sector. See UN-HABITAT, *State of the World Cities 2010/2011: Bridging the Urban Divide* (Earthscan, London and Washington D.C., 2010).

[3] The World Bank, *World Development Report 2009: Reshaping Economic Geography* (2009), which is available at: http://econ.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64165259&theSitePK=469372&piPK=64165421&menuPK=64166093&entityID=000333038_20081203234958 (last accessed on 6 May 2011).

interventions that are taking place at the national, city and district (or neighbourhood) scales vis-à-vis strategies aimed at inclusive urbanization, social equity and economic balance.

With the above in mind, this study poses a set of questions, namely: (a) where do the countries of the ESCWA region stand in regard to the debate on the right to inclusive cities; (b) what urban development and planning approaches are they adopting and implementing to respond to existing urban inequalities; (c) what courses of action have they fostered in order to attain equitable urban development; and (d) how successful are these interventions.

In an attempt to respond to the above questions, and with reference to specific examples and case studies, this report will present the following:

(a) A synopsis of the urban divide and multiple forms of polarization in the region;

(b) An overview of spatial planning policies and practices taking place at national, subnational, city and city-district levels, as they relate to the objective of promoting inclusive development;

(c) A framework for action to guide the governments of the region towards more inclusive urban policy formulation and implementation.

4. *Work methodology*

In the course of preparing this report, ESCWA undertook a general review of spatial planning policies and practices taking place in the region and drafted a thematic paper on the topic.

Noting that divisions exist at all scales, namely, the regional, national and city scales, the concept paper identified three thematic areas that pertain to these different scales, and invited a number of urban development experts working in the region to submit working papers and cases studies that cover the proposed thematic areas. These include the following:

(a) *Theme 1. Unbalanced national growth and the challenge of inclusive development*: This theme focused on country-wide inequalities in terms of economic development, job opportunities and access to basic services; and on an array of spatial development policies adopted by the governments of the region to promote inclusive development;

(b) *Theme 2. Urban dualities and the role of urban planning and management*: This theme focused on the spatial divide and inequalities that exist within the cities of the region; and discussed prevalent approaches to city planning and management, their objectives and impacts on the social and the physical structure of cities;

(c) *Theme 3. Urban poverty and targeted development initiatives*: This theme investigated urbanization and urban development dynamics in the ESCWA region and the associated phenomenon of slum and informal settlements formation; and shed light on participatory planning and slum upgrading initiatives taking place in the region.

In addition and in order to allow the exchange of ideas and experiences among experts, ESCWA organized the Expert Group Meeting on Bridging the Urban Divide in the ESCWA Region: Towards Inclusive Cities, which brought together 25 participants from ESCWA member countries, including academics, practitioners, government officials, representatives of United Nations agencies and other regional urban development organizations. The papers and case studies presented at the Meeting stimulated the discussion on the urban challenges facing the ESCWA region, with a focus on urban inequalities and uneven development at the regional, national and city scales. Participants discussed issues related to urban inequalities in the region, shared lessons from experience and provided policy recommendations to concerned central and local governments.

This report builds on the issues, cases and recommendations that were presented at the Meeting and synthesizes them, based on complementary data and relevant sources of information.

5. *Content and structure of the study*

This report comprises five chapters, as follows:

(a)   Chapter I presents an overview of the urban divide in the ESCWA region and some of the most apparent forms of urban polarization that can be observed at the regional, national, city and intercity scales;

(b)   Chapter II provides a background on the trajectory of spatial planning in the ESCWA region and the current prevailing approaches, with a focus on multiple forms of spatial inequalities;

(c)   Chapter III describes the array of spatial development strategies that the countries and cities of the region are adopting in response to contemporary urban challenges;

(d)   Chapter IV presents a critical overview of spatial planning policies and practices in the ESCWA region, and highlights the mismatch that exists between the good intentions voiced by governments and realities on the ground;

(e)   Chapter V outlines a framework for action aimed at the governments of the region.

6. *Limitations*

The production of this report has been constrained by many factors, including limitation of relevant statistical data and inadequate analysis of the diverse urban planning approaches that are taking place in the region. The lack of studies that assess and critically reflect on the region's current spatial interventions posed another limitation. Consequently, this report is not consistent in its geographic coverage, and its scope and content remain largely limited. Nonetheless, it can potentially contribute to filling a critical gap in urban spatial development analysis as it relates to the ESCWA region.

I. THE MULTIPLE FORMS OF INEQUALITY IN THE ESCWA REGION

A. REGIONAL DISPARITIES

The countries of the ESCWA region differ significantly in terms of their natural and economic resources and overall economic development. At the top end within that context, there are the oil-rich countries of the Gulf Corporation Council (GCC), namely Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. In the middle range, there are countries with more or less diversified economies, namely Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic. At the lower end of the range, there are the least developed countries that are mostly dependent on agrarian economies, namely the Sudan and Yemen. The pace of economic growth is, however, significantly higher in the countries of the GCC, which have opened up their borders to global markets and whose economies are better connected to global financial circuits.[4]

This diversified state of economic development is reflected in the considerable income gap between GCC countries and other countries in the region, and which has significantly grown in the past decade as a result of increasing oil prices. Statistical data show that around half of the region's gross domestic product (GDP) is concentrated in high and middle-to-high income countries, which account for 16.4 per cent of the region's population. For instance, in 2005 the average GDP per capita (calculated on the basis of purchasing power parity) in Qatar was approximately 30 times higher than in Yemen, at $27,664 compared to $930; and over four times the average for the wider Arab region at large, at $6,716.[5] Other sources of data estimate that in 2006, while the total population of GCC countries constituted approximately 12 per cent of the population of the wider Arab region (including Maghreb countries), their economies accounted for more than 55 per cent of the region's overall economic wealth and their per capita income, at an estimated average of $19,300, was 10.4 times greater than the average recorded for other Arab countries.[6]

Similar to per capita GDP rates, poverty rates vary significantly among the different countries of the region. While specific data on income poverty are limited, available statistics show that large proportions of people live below extreme national poverty lines in several countries, including Yemen, at 34.8 per cent (6.8 million in 2006); Egypt, at 19.6 per cent (13.7 million in 2005); Jordan, at 14.2 per cent (0.7 million in 2002); Syrian Arab Republic, at 11.4 per cent (2.1 million in 2004); and Lebanon, at 7.97 per cent (0.3 million in 2005).[7]

Based on the upper national poverty lines, which vary from one country to the next, these percentages increase significantly, as follows: Yemen, at 59.9 per cent (12.6 million in 2005); Egypt, at 40.9 per cent (29.8 million in 2004-2005); Syrian Arab Republic, at 30.1 per cent (5.5 million in 2003-2004); Lebanon, at 28.6 per cent (1.1 million in 2004-2005); and Jordan, at 11.3 per cent (0.6 million in 2006). The two countries with the highest Human Poverty Index (HPI) in the region are the Sudan, at 34.3 per cent, and Yemen, 36.6 per cent, where illiteracy rates are high and access to safe water and nutrition is low.[8]

The countries of the region also exhibit diverse socio-economic characteristics and human development levels. According to data presented in the latest *Arab Human Development Report 2009*,

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[4] M. Harb, "Unbalanced Growth and the Challenge of Inclusive Development", which was presented to the Expert Group Meeting on Bridging the Urban Divide in the ESCWA Region: Towards Inclusive Cities (Beirut, 25-26 November 2010).

[5] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Arab Human Development Report 2009: Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries* (UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States, New York, 2009), p. 229.

[6] Y. el-Sheshtawy (ed.), *The Evolving Arab City: Tradition, Modernity and Urban Development* (London: Routledge, 2008).

[7] UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report 2009*, p. 113.

[8] Ibid., p. 114.

among 182 countries, three GCC countries had high levels of human development in 2007,[9] namely Kuwait (ranked 31), Qatar (33) and the United Arab Emirates (35). Countries with medium-to-high human development include the other three GCC countries and Lebanon, ranked as follows: Bahrain (39), Oman (56), Saudi Arabia (59) and Lebanon (83). Countries with medium-to-low human development include: Jordan (96), Syrian Arab Republic (107), Palestine (110), Egypt (123), Yemen (140) and the Sudan (150).[10] While Iraq is not listed, available data on education and life expectancy are among the lowest in the region.[11]

Such regional disparities are reflected in the form of workforce migratory flows from less developed to more developed countries, mainly to cities where job opportunities are concentrated. More specifically, regional economic and human development disparities have contributed to significant labour force migration flows from poorer Arab countries (and from South and South-East Asia) towards richer countries in the region, mainly the countries of the Gulf subregion and some other non-oil producing countries, including Jordan and Lebanon.[12] Specifically, in the Gulf subregion, the economic need to import large numbers of foreign workers has distorted the population structure and led to a critical imbalance between age and gender groups, and between the local citizens and expatriates.[13]

TABLE 1. INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES (NUMBERS)

Country	Number of international migrants			Number of refugees		
	2000	2005	2010	2000	2005	2010
Bahrain	239 366	278 166	315 403	1	0	1
Egypt	169 149	246 745	244 714	6 697	89 645	92 789
Iraq	146 910	128 115	83 380	128 350	48 115	43 380
Jordan	1 927 845	2 345 235	2 972 983	1 571 234	1 946 359	2 526 834
Kuwait	1 500 442	1 869 665	2 097 527	3 555	1 521	38 105
Lebanon	692 913	721 191	758 167	379 894	402 487	462 584
Palestine	1 407 631	1 660 576	1 923 808	1 407 631	1 660 576	1 923 808
Oman	623 608	666 263	826 074	0	7	7
Qatar	470 731	712 861	1 305 428	19	46	46
Saudi Arabia	5 136 402	6 336 666	7 288 900	5 436	240 627	240 757
Sudan	853 867	639 686	753 447	402 962	144 422	209 461
Syrian Arab Republic	924 086	1 326 359	2 205 847	388 168	747 766	1 581 181
United Arab Emirates	2 286 174	2 863 027	3 293 264	532	105	167
Yemen	413 530	455 230	517 926	60 511	74 161	106 579

Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision* (United Nations, 2009).

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[9] The Human Development Index of 2010, however, reflects some changes in the ranks of countries whereby, among 169 countries, three countries in the region occupied the highest category, namely: United Arab Emirates (32), Qatar (38) and Bahrain (39). In the high category were Kuwait (47); Saudi Arabia (55) and Jordan (82); countries in the medium category included Egypt (101) and the Syrian Arab Republic (111); and Yemen (133) and the Sudan (154) were in the low category. Iraq, Lebanon, Oman and Palestine were not ranked. See UNDP, *Human Development Report 2010*, which is available at: http://hdr.undp.org (last accessed on 6 May 2011).

[10] UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report 2009*, which is available at: http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2009_Tables_rev.xls (last accessed on 6 May 2011).

[11] Ibid., p. 229.

[12] Y. el-Sheshtawy, "Urban Dualities and the Role of Urban Planning and Management", which was presented to the Expert Group Meeting on Bridging the Urban Divide in the ESCWA Region: Towards Inclusive Cities (Beirut, 25-26 November 2010).

[13] B. Mumtaz, "Bridging the Urban Divide in the ESCWA Region", which was presented to the Expert Group Meeting on Bridging the Urban Divide in the ESCWA Region: Towards Inclusive Cities (Beirut, 25-26 November 2010).

Currently, the cities and towns of the ESCWA region are home to millions of foreign migrant workers and refugees, including Palestinian, Iraqi and Somali refugees. In some GCC countries, the number of migrant workers surpasses the number of nationals. For example, the percentage of international migrants to the total national population is currently 68.8 per cent in Kuwait, 70 per cent in the United Arab Emirates and 86.5 per cent in Qatar. According to estimates by the United Nations, the total number of international migrants in the ESCWA region reached around 24.6 million in 2010 out of a total population of 260.2 million, which represents 10.5 per cent of the region's population (tables 1 and 2). Additionally, the region currently hosts some 7.2 million refugees, including Iraqi war refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic; and Palestinian returnees who have settled in the occupied Palestinian territories.

TABLE 2. INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES (PERCENTAGES)

Country	International migrants as a percentage of the population					Refugees as a percentage of international migrants				
	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Bahrain	35.1	35.7	36.8	38.2	39.1	0.6	0	0	0	0
Egypt	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	1.1	3.6	4	36.3	37.9
Iraq	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.5	88.3	87.4	37.6	52
Jordan	35.2	37.4	39.7	42.1	45.9	81.1	80.2	81.5	83	85
Kuwait	74	63.2	67.3	69.2	68.8	0	1.5	0.2	0.1	1.8
Lebanon	17.6	18.8	18.4	17.7	17.8	58.3	53	54.8	55.8	61
Palestine	42.3	45.9	44.7	44.1	43.6	100	100	100	100	100
Oman	23	26.8	26	25.5	28.4	0	0	0	0	0
Qatar	79.1	77.2	76.3	80.5	86.5	0	0	0	0	0
Saudi Arabia	29.2	25.3	24.7	26.8	27.8	0	0.3	0.1	3.8	3.3
Sudan	4.7	3.6	2.4	1.7	1.7	70.6	63.1	47.2	22.6	27.8
Syrian Arab Republic	5.4	5.6	5.6	6.9	9.8	41	46	42	56.4	71.7
United Arab Emirates	71.3	70.6	70.6	70	70	0	0	0	0	0
Yemen	2.8	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.1	12.1	13.5	14.6	16.3	20.6

Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision* (United Nations, 2009).

B. DISPARITIES WITHIN THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION

1. *Income and social inequalities*

While data on income inequality within the countries of the ESCWA region are largely unavailable, countries for which data are available have a moderate Gini coefficient, that is relatively low levels of inequality. These included the following: Egypt (0.320 in 2004-2005), Jordan (0.359 in 2002), Lebanon (0.360 in 2005), Syrian Arab Republic (0.375 in 2004) and Yemen (0.366 in 2005). In particular, while data limitation makes it difficult to analyse changes in income level, analysts believe that income inequalities and social exclusion have increased in most countries in the ESCWA region over the past two decades, especially in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, but have dropped in Egypt and Jordan.[14]

The latest Arab Human Development Report stresses that "land and asset concentration is conspicuous" in many countries, which "provokes a sense of exclusion among other groups, even if absolute poverty does not increase".[15] This is true in several countries in the region. For example, while property prices have dropped in some countries following the recent global financial crisis, in some cities in the region, the trend towards ever more expensive land and property has continued unabated. In Cairo, for example, the cost of formal housing is beyond the means of a significant share of the population. Out of Egypt's "80 million people, [only] around 5 per cent can afford a European standard of living".[16]

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[14] UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report 2009*, pp. 115-116.

[15] Ibid., p. 116.

[16] N. Walter, "Developers urged to balance high-end and affordable housing", *Gulf News* (8 October 2010), as cited in Y. el-Sheshtawy, "Urban Dualities and the Role of Urban Planning and Management", p. 34.

Interestingly, while poverty is clearly more of an issue in the middle-income and least developed countries of the region, oil-rich countries also have significant numbers of urban poor. This is the case, for example, of Saudi Arabia which does not fare better than the Syrian Arab Republic in terms of the share of population suffering from hunger, at 4 per cent in both countries, despite the substantial income gap between those two ESCWA members.[17] This suggests that resources, alone, are "not sufficient to promote the development of a society or to achieve sustainable economic growth".[18] Clearly, the benefits of the economic boom in Saudi Arabia have not benefited all citizens. Many low-income groups remain marginalized and excluded. For example, some of the recent rural migrants to Riyadh, mostly from the southern region of the country, live in unacceptable conditions in slum settlements that have emerged on the outskirts of the city.[19]

Typically, it is the poor and foreign migrant workers and refugees who suffer from the highest degree of exclusion. Likewise, women and youth are often excluded from urban opportunities, especially access to employment. Indeed, while unemployment is one of the main socio-economic challenges facing the region as a whole, youth unemployment and female unemployment rates are significantly higher than those in other regions. Estimates for 2005-2006 by the Arab Labour Organization (ALO) show that the unemployment rates among the youth of the Arab region was nearly double the global average, at 30 per cent compared to 14 per cent.[20] Moreover, youth unemployment rates varied significantly between the countries of the ESCWA region, as follows: Iraq (46 per cent), the Sudan (41 per cent), Jordan (39 per cent), Palestine (34 per cent), Yemen (29 per cent), Egypt (26 per cent), Saudi Arabia (26 per cent), Kuwait (23 per cent), Lebanon (21 per cent), Bahrain (21 per cent), Qatar (21 per cent), Oman (20 per cent), Syrian Arab Republic (20 per cent) and United Arab Emirates (6 per cent).[21]

2. *Geographic disparities*

In terms of the geographic distribution of poverty within the countries of the region, some analysts believe that rural poverty rates are higher than urban poverty rates.[22] However, it is difficult to generalize in the absence of accurate statistics and comparisons. Specifically, there is evidence of income poverty prevalence in the rural areas of Egypt, Jordan, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.[23] At the same time, there is evidence that poverty, worldwide, is becoming more and more urbanized, with the unprecedented growth of the urban population.[24] As a recent *World Development Report* suggests, the number of poor people living in rural areas could actually be higher than that in urban areas. Cities, however, have far higher concentrations of poverty.[25] A close look at the urbanization dynamics of Western Asia supports this argument and suggests that the geographic divide that exists within the countries of the region is between

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[17] UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report 2009*, p. 113.

[18] Ibid.

[19] K. Murphy, "Saudi's quicksand of poverty", *LA* Times (16 May 2003), as cited in Y. el-Sheshtawy, op. cit.

[20] These estimates by the Arab Labour Organization (ALO) were quoted in UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report 2009*, p. 109.

[21] Ibid.

[22] For example, see F. Iqbal, "Sustaining Gains in Poverty Reduction and Human Development in the Middle East and North Africa" (the World Bank, 2006), which is available at: http://pgpblog.worldbank.org/poverty_reduction_in_the_middle_east_and_north_africa (last accessed on 6 May 2011).

[23] UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report 2009*, p. 113.

[24] For example, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) stresses that urban poverty in many parts of the world is growing much more rapidly than rural poverty. UNFPA, *State of World Population 2007: Unleashing the Potential of Urban Growth* (UNFPA 2007), which is available at: http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2007/ (last accessed on 6 May 2011). See also D. Satterthwaite, "The Millennium Development Goals and Urban Poverty Reduction: Great Expectations and Nonsense Statistics", *Environment and Urbanization*, vol. 15 (2003).

[25] The World Bank, *World Development Report 2009: Reshaping Economic Geography* (2009).

rural and urban areas and, moreover, between main and secondary cities, as well as between leading and lagging districts of a city.

According to estimates by the United Nations, Western Asia is one of the most rapidly growing and urbanizing regions in the world. While urbanization trends vary from one country to another, population growth rates (both urban and total) for the region as a whole are particularly high, compared to other regions and to the world average. Between 2000 and 2005, the region's total population growth rate was estimated to be almost double the world rate, at 2.39 per cent for the ESCWA region compared to 1.26 per cent for the world; and the urban population growth rates were also significantly higher, at 2.89 per cent for the ESCWA region compared to 2.20 per cent for the world. Moreover, population projections show that despite the anticipated decrease in the region's total and urban population growth rates, the regional population is still set to grow at a higher pace than the average world total (table 3).

TABLE 3. POPULATION GROWTH RATES IN THE ESCWA REGION

Country	Total annual growth rate (%)					Urban annual growth rate (%)				
	1990-1995	2000-2005	2010-2015	2020-2025	2025-2030	1990-1995	2000-2005	2010-2015	2020-2025	2025-2030
Bahrain	3.17	2.25	1.77	1.37	1.23	3.23	2.26	1.85	1.50	1.37
Egypt	2.00	1.90	1.66	1.24	1.10	1.69	2.00	2.09	2.18	2.23
Iraq	2.97	2.72	2.63	2.10	1.80	2.70	2.44	2.59	2.44	2.30
Jordan	5.59	2.74	1.44	1.46	1.27	7.18	2.75	1.57	1.71	1.56
Kuwait	-4.34	3.84	2.04	1.55	1.38	-4.32	3.86	2.06	1.57	1.40
Lebanon	3.20	1.58	0.79	0.64	0.51	3.61	1.72	0.94	0.80	0.67
Palestine	3.89	3.55	2.87	2.42	2.21	4.63	3.86	3.19	2.77	2.58
Oman	3.28	1.72	1.92	1.58	1.36	4.90	1.80	2.27	1.96	1.75
Qatar	2.35	7.23	1.55	1.20	1.09	2.75	7.33	1.62	1.25	1.13
Saudi Arabia	2.32	2.53	1.95	1.56	1.34	2.85	2.81	2.21	1.81	1.57
Sudan	2.59	2.06	2.00	1.61	1.46	5.29	3.84	3.74	3.07	2.80
Syrian Arab Republic	2.77	2.94	1.69	1.54	1.33	3.24	3.63	2.45	2.35	2.15
United Arab Emirates	5.28	4.67	1.97	1.53	1.41	5.10	5.16	2.32	1.77	1.61
Yemen	4.63	2.90	2.74	2.31	2.05	7.17	4.84	4.59	4.06	3.74
ESCWA region[*]	2.64	2.39	1.98	1.61	1.43	3.02	2.89	2.55	2.37	2.24
Total world	1.54	1.26	1.11	0.86	0.73	2.38	2.20	1.85	1.65	1.54

Sources: Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision* (United Nations, 2009); and *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2009 Revision*, which is available at: http://esa.un.org/wup2009/unup/ (last accessed on 6 May 2011).

[*] The calculations for the total ESCWA figures are based on estimates from the above-mentioned source.

In fact, estimates for 2010 show that the urban population is remarkably high in several countries of the region, including Kuwait, at 98.4 per cent of total population; Qatar, at 95.8 per cent; Bahrain, at 88.6 per cent; Lebanon, at 87.2 per cent; United Arab Emirates, at 84.1 per cent; and Saudi Arabia, at 82.1 per cent. With the exception of Yemen, all countries in Western Asia will be more than 50 per cent urbanized by 2030, with Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia becoming almost totally urbanized (table 4).

Population analysts believe that future urban population growth rates will stem mainly from natural growth, given that the dynamism of the rural-to-urban migratory process are expected to decelerate between 2000 and 2020 in most urban agglomerations of the region, with the exception of a few cities, including Damascus, Cairo, Alexandria, and some towns in Jordan.[26]

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[26] ESCWA, "Population and Development: The Demographic Profile of Arab Countries", which is available at: http://www.escwa.org.lb/information/publications/edit/upload/ssd-03-booklet.2.pdf (last accessed on 6 May 2011).

TABLE 4. URBAN POPULATION RELATIVE TO TOTAL POPULATION

Country	Total population (*thousands*)				Urban population (*thousands*)				Percentage urban (%)			
	1990	2010	2030	2050	1990	2010	2030	2050	1990	2010	2030	2050
Bahrain	493	807	1 085	1 277	434	715	984	1 185	88.1	88.6	90.6	92.8
Egypt	57 785	84 474	110 907	129 533	25 124	36 664	56 477	81 998	43.5	43.4	50.9	63.3
Iraq	18 079	31 467	48 909	63 995	12 602	20 822	33 930	49 193	69.7	66.2	69.4	76.9
Jordan	3 254	6 472	8 616	10 241	2 350	5 083	7 063	8 844	72.2	78.5	82	86.4
Kuwait	2 143	3 051	4 273	5 240	2 100	3 001	4 218	5 187	98	98.4	98.7	99
Lebanon	2 974	4 255	4 858	5 033	2 472	3 712	4 374	4 652	83.1	87.2	90	92.4
Palestine	2 154	4 409	7 320	10 265	1 462	3 269	5 810	8 692	67.9	74.1	79.4	84.7
Oman	1 843	2 905	4 048	4 878	1 218	2 122	3 184	4 108	66.1	73	78.7	84.2
Qatar	467	1 508	1 951	2 316	431	1 445	1 891	2 261	92.2	95.8	96.9	97.6
Saudi Arabia	16 259	26 246	36 545	43 658	12 451	21 541	31 516	39 161	76.6	82.1	86.2	89.7
Sudan	27 091	43 192	60 995	75 884	7 211	17 322	33 267	51 365	26.6	40.1	54.5	67.7
Syrian Arab Republic	12 721	22 505	30 560	36 911	6 224	12 545	19 976	27 696	48.9	55.7	65.4	75
United Arab Emirates	1 867	4 707	6 555	8 253	1 476	3 956	5 821	7 567	79.1	84.1	88.8	91.7
Yemen	12 314	24 256	39 350	53 689	2 577	7 714	17 844	32 303	20.9	31.8	45.3	60.2
ESCWA region	159 444	260 254	365 972	45 1173	78 132	139 911	226 355	324 212	49.0	53.8	61.9	71.9

Sources: Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision* (United Nations, 2009); and *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2009 Revision*, which is available at: http://esa.un.org/wup2009/unup/ (last accessed on 6 May 2011).

In some countries, namely, Kuwait, Lebanon and Qatar, population growth is concentrated in one urban agglomeration or a single city (or primate city), typically the capital city (table 5). By and large, however, the increase in urban population will be absorbed by both the capital cities and by secondary cities and small and medium-sized towns.[27] Paradoxically, differences in the availability and quality of services, amenities and opportunities between different cities and regions are likely to remain high, given that many secondary cities and towns have neither the financial resources nor the required technical capacities and institutional set-up to deal with the requirements of rapid urbanization.

On another level, the increased global competition between cities to attract investment, notably into tourism and other key services, is amplifying uneven urban development patterns, given that some cities that are seen as suited for global economic systems are growing, while others are left out of the globalization process. More than anything, however, the economic competition between the cities of the region (sometimes cities within the same country) is leading to fundamental geographic contradictions and to an acute concentration of wealth in a few cities, mainly those that can offer comparative advantages and better infrastructure and services to attract investors.

[27] The primacy of Beirut reached a peak of 81.8 per cent in 1975 and a lowest level of 42.8 per cent in 1995 as a result of the war in Lebanon, and subsequently increased again to 50.3 per cent in 2005. The primacy of Kuwait City reached a peak of 86.7 per cent in 1970 and a lowest level of 66.3 per cent in 1990 during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, after which it began to increase and was an estimated 76.8 per cent in 2010. See Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision* (United Nations, 2009); and *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2009 Revision*.

TABLE 5. PERCENTAGE OF THE URBAN POPULATION IN CITIES ACROSS THE ESCWA REGION

Country	City	1980	1995	2010	2025
Egypt	Alexandria	13.1	12.6	13	12.2
	Cairo	38.4	37.4	36.7	33.5
Iraq	Basra	4	4.2	4.5	4.3
	Mosul	5.3	6	7.1	7.1
	Baghdad	34.1	30.9	28.9	27.1
	Irbil	3	4.3	5	4.9
Jordan	Amman	47.7	28.9	21.8	21
Kuwait	Kuwait City	68.4	70.3	76.8	75.2
Lebanon	Beirut	79.1	42.8	52.6	50.8
Saudi Arabia	Dammam	3.1	3.7	4.2	4.1
	Medina	4.5	4.7	5.1	5
	Riyadh	16.7	21.1	22.4	21.2
	Jeddah	13.4	15.3	14.9	14.1
	Mecca	7.9	7.2	6.9	6.6
Sudan	Khartoum	29.7	35.1	27.8	25.7
Syrian Arab Republic	Damascus	32.8	25.3	22.8	21.3
	Aleppo	25.5	25.6	25.3	23.6
	Homs	9.2	9.3	9.3	8.9
United Arab Emirates	Dubai	31	34.1	41	40.8
Yemen	Hudaida	8.3	8.4	12.2	12.2
	Sana'a	17.2	28	30.1	28.7
	Ta'izz	8.8	8.9	11.6	11.4

Sources: Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision*, *World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision* (United Nations, 2007); and *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2007 Revision*, which is available at: http://esa.un.org/unup (last accessed on 6 May 2011).

C. INTERCITY POLARIZATION

1. *Polarization in the ability to access urban advantages*

Access to adequate housing, basic infrastructure and social services is a very serious problem facing millions of urban dwellers and a major challenge for most countries of the region. In 2001 and within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) database, the United Nations presented some alarming figures on slum or slum-like conditions that prevail in many countries of the region. The rates of people living in inadequate conditions relative to the total urban population were found to be 86 per cent in the Sudan (representing approximately 10.1 million people), 61 per cent in Oman (1.2 million people), 60 per cent in Palestine (1.3 million people), 57 per cent in Iraq (9 million people), 50 per cent in Lebanon (1.6 million people), 40 per cent in Egypt (11.7 million people), 20 per cent in Saudi Arabia (3.6 million people), 16 per cent in Jordan (0.6 million people), and 10 per cent in the Syrian Arab Republic (0.9 million people).[28]

Comparative data for 2005 show that, with the exception of Egypt, whose slum population relative to total population is decreasing, the slum population of the countries of the region for which data are available is increasing at different rates (tables 6 and 7).

Some improvements have certainly taken place in the past decade and many countries have achieved remarkable results in terms of urban services provision. However, in the absence of accurate statistics, it is hard to judge whether the current percentages on improved urban services are realistic or overestimated.

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[28] These figures are based on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) database of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), which were calculated on the basis of three indicators, namely: (a) access to drinking water; (b) adequate sanitation; and (c) sufficient living area. Estimates relied on data presented by UNICEF/WHO (for the first two indicators) and UNSD (for the third indicator).

What is certain, though, is that the countries of the region are increasingly confronted by numerous challenges resulting from such key factors as population and demographic pressures, water scarcity, pollution and climate change, which affect their ability to provide urban services at the required scales.

As mentioned above, the projected increase in urban population will be absorbed by both the capital cities and by secondary cities and small and medium-sized towns, many of which have neither the resources nor the technical and urban management capacities to deliver urban services at the required scale. This problem is intensified by the failure of many governments to decentralize revenue-raising to the municipal level, and the institutional and managerial inability of some municipalities to tackle key urban challenges effectively.

At the same time, the lack of pro-poor policies and the skewed allocation of public resources is placing millions of urban dwellers at an even greater disadvantage and denying them the "right to the city". Vulnerable groups, which include a comparatively large number of migrant workers and refugees, are often unable to access urban advantages. The crowding of the urban poor in slums and informal settlements aggravates their social exclusion from formal city life and economy.

TABLE 6. TOTAL SLUM POPULATION IN THE ESCWA REGION

Country	Urban slum population		
	1990	2001	2005
Bahrain	..	..	..
Egypt	14 086 925	11 761 704	5 405 326
Iraq	6 824 582	9 026 243	9 692 492
Jordan	387 750	623 494	718 812
Kuwait	..	..	..
Lebanon	1 142 000	1 601 500	1 756 720
Oman	671 134	1 213 971	..
Palestine	..	1 333 289	..
Qatar	..	..	..
Saudi Arabia	2 385 108	3 609 342	4 070 289
Sudan	5 707 584	10 106 860	13 913 793
Syrian Arab Republic	628 609	891 523	981 945
United Arab Emirates	..	..	..
Yemen	1 787 400	3 109 569	3 802 848

Source: United Nations Statistics Division, Millennium Development Goals database.

Note: Two dots (..) indicate that data are not available.

TABLE 7. SLUM POPULATION IN SELECTED ESCWA MEMBER COUNTRIES
(*Percentage of urban population*)

Country	Slum population as a percentage of urban population	
	1990	2001
Egypt	58	40
Iraq	57	57
Jordan	17	16
Lebanon	50	50
Oman	61	61
Palestine	..	60
Saudi Arabia	20	20
Sudan	86	86
Syrian Arab Republic	10	10
Yemen	68	65

Source: United Nations Statistics Division, Millennium Development Goals database.

Note: Two dots (..) indicate that data are not available.

2. *Spatial polarization along ethnic and socio-economic lines*

Like elsewhere in the developing world, rapid urbanization is transforming the spatial and social landscapes of many cities in the ESCWA region. In some cases, cities are growing well beyond their administrative boundaries to engulf smaller towns and the semi-urban and rural hinterlands. In other cases, urban growth is happening in a linear urban corridor fashion. Such uncontrolled and unguided urban growth is generally resulting in the partitioning or the fragmentation of the physical fabric of cities along income, social and ethnic lines.

While urban spatial stratification on the basis of income might not be very obvious in some cities, social class has always been an important factor in determining the place of residence. In fact, the urban development history in the region shows that, with the growth of the city, higher income groups tend to withdraw from less served to better served areas and from areas where income and social mix are different to their own. A good example is Cairo, where rapid population growth has affected both the peripheral and older districts and the once well-appointed suburbs, such as Zamalek and Maadi, that are being transformed into dense, high-rise residential areas. Increasingly, traffic congestion, noise and environmental pollution are forcing higher-income groups out to new, opulent private cities and gated enclaves, including, for example, DreamLand, Utopia and Beverley Hills. New ring roads are helping them to move out, leaving mega slum areas behind.[29]

Similarly, spatial divisions along income lines exist in most cities across the Gulf subregion. Typically, the poor and low-income groups and foreign migrants live in the dilapidated buildings of city centres, while middle and high-income migrant workers live in rented accommodation or in housing provided by employers. The big divide that exists in GCC countries is often between nationals and expatriates. For example, societies in Kuwait and Qatar "engage in a process of self-segregation" that is reinforced by land and housing policies, which in turn accentuate the division of residential areas and commercial space along citizenship and nationality lines. Land ownership by non-nationals is particularly restricted. In Qatar, for example, landownership policies limit foreign ownership to "a few high-end development projects aimed at attracting foreign investment".[30]

Dubai exhibits similar patterns of divisions along nationality and socio-economic lines. It is estimated that some 500,000 expatriates on a bachelor status live in that city, many of whom are actually married but cannot afford or are not permitted to bring their families from abroad. Most of them live in rented rooms in shared accommodations or live in so-called labour camps that are located around the city.[31] Whether in Doha or Dubai, the boundaries of these "ethnic spaces" are hardly rigid, as "there is relatively easy entry into spaces for non-members interested in purchasing the services or merchandise offered".[32] Paradoxically, the location, architecture, merchandise and high security around the new, affluent urban spaces – such as shopping malls, five-star hotels and waterfront developments – is accentuating existing social biases (boxes 1 and 2).

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[29] A. Bayat and E. Denis, "Who is afraid of ashwaiyyat? Urban change and politics in Egypt", *Environment and Urbanization*, vol. 12 (2000), pp. 185-199.

[30] Y. el-Sheshtawy, "Urban Dualities and the Role of Urban Planning and Management".

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

Box 1. Deepening patterns of inequality in Dubai

Dubai's urban development and the accompanying patterns of exclusion have been extensively documented. Lavish shopping malls, five-star hotels and waterfront developments are geared to a very specific segment of society. While low-income people are not explicitly excluded, there are numerous signs and measures to indicate that they are not welcome in those spaces. For instance, Deira City Center, a mall in the centre of the city, is surrounded by multilane highways and is almost impossible to access without a car, which according to some analysts is a form of "geographical distancing and biased infrastructure development".[*]

One particularly relevant example in this context is the planned development of the district of Satwa, which is a neighbourhood located in the shadow of Dubai's skyscrapers on Sheikh Zayed road. The district was built in the late 1960s to provide housing for nationals who eventually moved out in 1980s to outlying suburbs and turned the houses over to low-income workers of a variety of nationalities, but mostly labourers from South Asia and other Arab countries. Currently, the area has one of the highest densities in Dubai and is marked by a high crime rate.

This is all set to change, however, with the announcement of the Jumeirah Gardens development which aims to replace the entire district. Jumeirah Gardens, which was unveiled in October 2008, is a luxury, mixed-use development involving the world's top architects and developers. Prior to this unveiling, residents of Satwa had been issued with eviction notices and buildings marked with green numbers indicated that they would be demolished. While the project is currently on hold as a result of the financial crisis, its developer is still operating and asserts that the project will move ahead with a more favourable financial climate.

The city in its overall development pattern, as exemplified by the case of Satwa, has become a guiding light and a frame of reference for the rest of the region. For the most part, its rapid and spectacular growth, and the scale with which this has been attempted, has transformed the city into an urban model of development to the extent that it has sparked debate among researchers about the "Dubai model".

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Source: ESCWA, based on a case study by Y. el-Sheshtawy.

[*] S. Graham and S. Marvin, *Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities, and the Urban Condition* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 269.

Box 2. The case of Uptown Cairo

Perhaps the project that summarizes the inherent contradictions within Cairo's urban landscape and is a perfect manifestation of the urban divide in that city is Uptown Cairo, which is being developed by a Dubai-based company. This residential gated community is located on Cairo's Muqattam mountain, immediately overlooking Manshiet Nasser, one of the city's largest informal settlements.

The project has been opposed by various conservation groups and urban planning experts on the grounds that it will create traffic congestion on one of the city's main arteries; its environmental impact; and for social reasons, namely that it overlooks two low-income areas. Despite these objections, the project moved ahead and residential units went on sale in the summer of 2007. However, the proximity to one of the most notorious slums in Cairo could lead to social unrest, primarily because it makes visible in a most direct way the social polarization of Cairene society.

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Source: ESCWA, based on a case study by Y. el-Sheshtawy.

II. SPATIAL PLANNING IN THE ESCWA REGION

A. TRAJECTORY

Spatial planning in the ESCWA region has evolved in ways that mirror the distinctive histories and economic, social, political and cultural contexts of the different countries of the region. All countries, however, witnessed some dramatic shifts in the second half of the twentieth century in the way spatial planning was conceptualized and practiced, and in the level of involvement by the State in the design and implementation of proposed plans. While the literature that frames these shifts is largely unavailable, empirical evidence suggests that spatial planning followed the broad trajectory recognized in other parts of the world, which are summarized below.

Between the 1950s and early 1970s, there was a general interest in comprehensive master plans that were often developed in accordance with discursive technical procedures in order to define problems, objectives, design alternative, and implementation and monitoring strategies. Assuming the role of rational experts with a comprehensive knowledge of what urban areas needed to look like, urban planners and concerned public authorities took the lead in defining broad physical, social and economic objectives to guide the city development process. Paradoxically, the ensuing master plans focused primarily on the physical qualities of space and on economic growth and development concerns, but greatly failed to address the real social needs of the majority of city inhabitants. More specifically, the plans developed during this period could well have provided a healthier city environment for higher-income groups at the expense of poor city dwellers and their neighbourhoods. Examples of this planning approach include Gutton's Master Plan for Aleppo (1954) and the Doxiadis Master Plan for Riyadh (1968-1972).

During the 1970s and 1980s, there was a general shift of interest from master plans towards a project approach to planning, together with welfare social policies that focused on the redistribution of economic growth. This shift was mainly triggered by the accelerated growth of cities; the widening gap between the rich and the poor; the failure of the economic growth model, which had guided the above-mentioned period, in generating trickle-down effects; and the inability of earlier master plans and social housing projects to respond to pressing social needs. Particularly in the Gulf subregion, the oil boom led to an unparalleled spending boom in the history of many GCC countries. These countries embarked on massive infrastructure projects and public expenditure programmes, and expanded their service provision in many social areas, including health, education and housing.[33]

In the late 1980s, there was a shift to an "entrepreneurial approach"[34] to planning rooted in neo-liberal ideology and the belief that the market, rather than the State, was the entity that was capable of addressing economic problems and meeting social needs. This shift was motivated by the Structural Adjustment Policies, which was proposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, and by globalization forces and new modes of economic production. As a result, the market emerged as a main actor in guiding urban change, and the State became an enabler and supporter of the market. Hence, spatial planning as a State activity was reduced in scope, in terms of setting the necessary infrastructure for the private sector and enhancing market mechanisms. The ensuing public-private sector partnerships were in many cases aimed at enhancing urban productivity. At the same time, urban policy and urban management emerged as a development activity in their own right, falling under the responsibility of the public sector.[35] Projects that can be listed under this planning approach include mega-scale real estate projects and profit-oriented urban regeneration projects of rundown city centers, such as Beirut's Downtown district.

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[33] M. Abdel-Fadil, "The Macro Behaviour of Oil-Rentier States in the Arab Region" in *The Rentier State*, H. Beblawi and G. Luciani (eds.) (London: Croom Helm, l987), pp. 83-84.

[34] The term "entrepreneurial approach" is often used in contemporary urban planning literature to describe urban planning styles that rest on the idea of stimulating and guiding private investment to promote development.

[35] This is partly a result of the Urban Management Programme (UMP), which is coordinated jointly by UNCHS (UN-HABITAT), UNDP and the World Bank.

Since the mid-1990s, there has been renewed interest in territorial plans, including strategic plans, master plans and integrated development plans; and in comprehensive spatial strategies at the national, subnational and city scales. For example, some GCC countries are articulating comprehensive national spatial development plans aimed mainly at promoting their economic competitiveness while concurrently regulating future growth in ways that encourage balanced national development. At the urban scale, some cities in the region, including Alexandria, Amman, Aleppo and Sana'a, are developing broad city-wide development plans that simultaneously aspire to enhance the city image, promote its economic advantages and competitiveness, and meet the needs of a growing urban population. With the support of international organizations working in the region, some cities are increasingly working on area-based policies and, in their spatial interventions, are targeting geographic areas where problems exist, particularly slums areas and informal settlements. Unlike earlier master plans, the current strategic territorial plans are not primarily concerned with the physical ordering of space. Rather their main focus is on establishing comprehensive development frameworks that are often linked to national and subnational development agendas aimed at setting key principles to guide and regulate the location, timing and form of future development. Moreover, these spatial frameworks, particularly in public-sector led projects, define the governance practices for producing and implementing strategies, policies, plans and projects.

B. Current spatial planning

Rather than being linear, the above-mentioned trajectories merge and overlap. As a result, three different approaches to spatial planning can be discerned in the region currently. These are as follows:

(a) A welfare state interventionist approach, which focuses on service provision that is complemented in some countries (mainly in the Gulf subregion) by an enabling approach to housing, including land distribution, housing grants and loans. In fact, many countries in the region, including GCC countries, have shifted in the past two decades from a housing provision to an enabling approach to housing mainly in view of the failure of earlier housing policies to meet required construction targets;

(b) An "entrepreneurial" approach, which gives primacy to market mechanisms and private sector projects as much as it does to mega-urban regeneration projects and strategic city plans that emphasize economic growth and the competitiveness of the city or region. Often these projects and plans are designed according to techno-corporatist discursive logic and comprehensive analysis, and in many cases involve public-private partnerships by way of amplifying their efficiency;

(c) An "institutionalist" approach,[36] which emphasizes the notions of local governance, decentralization, sustainability, participation, enablement, civil society engagement and inclusiveness. This approach also involves the production of strategic plans, which can range in scale from a single building to a district or to an entire city. Typically, these strategic plans, regardless of their scale, are developed through participatory processes, including public-private partnerships, which bring various actors together in order to develop shared visions of the future of the city or neighbourhood. This approach to planning is guided by social and institutional reform tendencies, given the strong emphasis it pays to local capacity-building and inclusion of civil society and local people in all stages of planning initiatives, including the decision-making stage.

While the various approaches to spatial planning that are taking place in the region is an important issue and needs to be explored in more depth, such an investigation falls beyond the scope of this report. However, chapter III addresses the spatial interventions of the governments in the region in as far as these relate to the overarching goal of bridging the urban divide and promoting more inclusive cities.

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[36] The term "institutionalist approach" is borrowed from Pasty Healy's writings on strategic spatial planning in Europe.

III. SPATIAL INTERVENTION TO PROMOTE INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT:
A REGIONAL OVERVIEW

A general review of prevailing spatial development interventions that are taking place in the region shows that the objective of bridging the urban divide and promoting more inclusive development is being addressed to varying degrees by the different countries of the region. Broadly speaking, the main aim is to meet the economic development demands of the new millennium and cope with the challenges of rapid urbanization, including uneven geographic development, the concentration of population and job opportunities in few cities, and the proliferation of slums and informal settlements in and around major urban centres. With this broad aim in mind, some countries, notably the GCC countries, have developed comprehensive national economic development visions, including the Economic Vision 2030 for Bahrain; Vision for Oman's Economy: Oman 2020; Qatar National Vision 2030; and Yemen's Strategic Vision 2025. At the same time, their spatial development interventions at all scales are explicitly linked to the overall guiding national economic vision and aimed at balanced territorial development.

At the urban scale, some countries are articulating city-wide development plans, namely, strategic plans and urban growth management plans in order to enhance their image, promote their economic advantages and competitiveness, and meet the needs of a growing urban population. For example, Alexandria, Amman, Aleppo and Sana'a have set long-term spatial development strategies aimed at integrating the spatial, social, economic, environmental and cultural dimensions of urban development. At the same time, some countries, notably the GCC countries, have specific spatial policies targeting the poor and other vulnerable groups.

More specifically, bridging the urban divide in the ESCWA region is being addressed through the following: (a) national policies and spatial strategies aimed at balanced territorial development; (b) projects and spatial investments to redirect urban growth to new urban centres and/or lagging regions; (c) comprehensive city plans and policies; (d) slum upgrading and geographically targeted initiatives; and (e) strategic interventions in public space upgrading and development.

A. BALANCED NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Increasingly, ESCWA member countries are stressing, in their five-year national development plans, the need for spatial, economic, social and environmental strategies that promote balanced national development. Some governments have initiated comprehensive national and subnational spatial plans and strategies on the conception of a balanced growth model and an equitable allocation of resources among different regions and sectors of the national economy. These spatial plans are country-specific in their objectives and priorities. The cases below further illustrate this point.

1. *Bahrain*

One of the main concerns of the Bahrain National Plan 2030, which was launched in 2005, is the promotion of balanced national development. The Plan calls for, among others, supporting the economic growth and development of secondary towns and villages; guiding local governments and potential developers towards economic opportunities; addressing the country's growing housing needs; protecting and promoting the country's natural and heritage resources and developing tourist areas.[37]

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[37] F. Ameen, "National Planning Development Strategies: The National Plan (Bahrain 2030)", which was presented to the Expert Group Meeting on Bridging the Urban Divide in the ESCWA Region: Towards Inclusive Cities (Beirut, 25-26 November 2010).

Unlike some other national spatial strategies, the prime objective of the Plan is economic growth, as it "aims to strike a balance between economic development and the optimum use of land".[38] Indeed, the Plan and accompanying infrastructure planning processes are aimed at promoting stable and sustainable economic growth in line with the objective of Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030. Guided by entrepreneurial objectives and economic development concerns, the Plan puts forward a set of strategies aimed at improving the image and economic competitiveness of the country as a whole. Specifically, the Plan pays due consideration to developing infrastructure in line with international standards and state-of-the-art connective technologies. It also defines new industrial areas and identifies key projects that enhance productivity, diversify local economic production, and promote economic growth and increase GDP.

More specifically, the spatial plan of Bahrain is an architecturally led, country-size project aimed at putting Bahrain on the world map. The first phase of the planning process, which was completed in 2007, comprised a zoning blueprint that was produced by a major American architectural company. The second phase of the planning process mainly involves developing national structural and strategic plan, comprising economic, social and environmental strategies; and detailed urban plans for each governorate, including computer-generated images of a vision of Bahrain in 20 years. These studies were commissioned from a consultancy firm based in the United Kingdom in June 2010, for a contract valued at $6.9 million.

2. *Iraq*

Iraq has deliberately focused on local development and participatory processes in defining priority spatial interventions across several governorates in the northern, central and southern parts of the country. The Local Area Development Programme (LADP), which is a joint undertaking of seven United Nations agencies and the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation in Iraq, has provided substantial input to the preparation of the strategic five-year budgetary plan (2010-2014) of the Ministry. This Programme is particularly relevant to the recovery of the country as a whole and is aligned with Iraq's National Development Strategy, which aims to attain a balanced growth of all regions. The Programme is equally motivated by the objectives of economic recovery and local capacity-building.[39]

3. *Lebanon*

The National Physical Plan of Lebanon, which was initiated in 2005 by the Council for Development and Reconstruction,[40] has been developed with three objectives, namely the unity of the country, balanced development of the regions within the country, and the optimal and sustainable use of resources. The Plan stresses the need for the following: (a) structuring the national territory around existing cities and major urban centres; (b) associating all regions to the national economic development; (c) distributing major public facilities in an effective and integrated manner; (d) linking the territory with an efficient and developed transportation network; (e) ensuring sound urban development, while respecting the characteristics of each region; (f) highlighting and benefiting from the natural wealth of the country; (g) exploiting the water resources in a sustainable way; and (h) resolving efficiently the problems of quarries, wastewater and solid wastes.

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[38] Statement of H.E. Juma Al Ka'abi, Minister of Municipalities and Agriculture in Bahrain, as reported in *Trade Arabia*, "$7m blueprint for Bahrain urban growth" (23 June 2010), which is available at: http://www.tradearabia.com/news/cons_181912.html (last accessed on 6 May 2011).

[39] S. al-Kadhimi, "Iraq's Local Area Development Programme (LADP)", which was presented to the Expert Group Meeting on Bridging the Urban Divide The Council for Development and Reconstruction replaced Lebanon's Ministry of Planning in 1977. See M. Harb, "Unbalanced Growth and the Challenge of Inclusive Development", which was presented to the Expert Group Meeting on Bridging the Urban Divide in the ESCWA Region: Towards Inclusive Cities (Beirut, 25-26 November 2010).in the ESCWA Region: Towards Inclusive Cities (Beirut, 25-26 November 2010).

[40] The Council for Development and Reconstruction replaced Lebanon's Ministry of Planning in 1977. See M. Harb, "Unbalanced Growth and the Challenge of Inclusive Development".

More specifically, the Plan focuses on optimizing the use of the country's natural and heritage resources and available land for the purposes of a nationwide process of economic, social, physical and environmental development. However, it does not elaborate on issues of social inclusion and poverty reduction, or on the institutional setup needed to implement proposed strategies. Instead, it confines itself to the physical aspects of planning as its name suggests.

4. *Oman*

In an attempt to promote the objective of balanced regional growth, Oman has initiated a long-term development plan, entitled the Oman National Spatial Strategy (ONSS). ONSS is primarily intended "to provide a framework for land use strategy that will ensure a sustainable socio-economic development at the national and regional levels, and to propose specific policies conducive to the implementation of the proposed strategy to achieve the goals set in the vision of the national economy, 'Oman 2020'".[41]

ONSS has been designed in accordance with Oman 2020 and, in turn, will "provide guidance and directions for all lower level 'hierarchies plans' as well as for the consecutive five-year development plans".[42] The Strategy has been commissioned from a specialized international firm and the Vienna University of Technology in Austria. Among other things, it aims to provide "a geographical balance through equitable distribution of development programmes among the regions, promote rural development, achieve balanced urban growth and promote public-private partnership."[43]

5. *Saudi Arabia*

In Saudi Arabia, the National Spatial Strategy was formulated by the Ministry for Municipal and Rural Affairs (MOMRA), with technical assistance from the United Nations. The Strategy was approved in 2000 and sets the legal framework for the spatial development of the country.

With the aim of rectifying past trends of interregional disparities and social polarization, the Strategy stresses the need for balanced and sustainable national urban development processes as well as the need to maintain economic efficiency and social equity. To that end, the Strategy addresses a wide range of issues, particularly the challenge of reducing the disparity gap in levels of development between leading and lagging areas, and promoting a spatially balanced urban system that can accommodate the projected increase in population while generating new jobs and opportunities. In the pursuit of this specific overarching goal, the Strategy puts forward a number of geographically targeted objectives and integrative strategies (box 3).

Box 3. The National Spatial Strategy of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's National Spatial Strategy fosters regional planning and spatially balanced development through a balanced geographic distribution of development programmes and projects among the various governorates or regions (provinces) of the country, while building on the comparative advantages of each geographic area. To that end, the Strategy stresses the need for the following:

(a) Diversifying the economic base of lagging regions through a multitude of incentives for the private sector and through public investments in economic and social infrastructure, including universities, hospitals, industrial zones and tourist attractions;

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[41] S. bin Mohammed al-Affani, Director General of the Supreme Committee for Town Planning (SCTP), as quoted in A. Kola, "30-year road map for all-round prosperity", *Times of Oman* Tuesday (3 August 2010), which is available at: http://www.timesofoman.com/innercat.asp?detail=38417 (last accessed on 6 May 2011).

[42] Ibid.

[43] G. Ramsauer, Chairman of Consatt, as quoted in A. Kola, op. cit.

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    (b)   Inducing the development of nodal growth zones and corridors, which can be medium and small cities or village clusters with growth potential, in order to reduce the primacy of large cities and provincial capitals over their surrounding areas and reduce migration from small cities and rural areas to large cities, thereby promoting a more balanced hierarchy of the urban system;

    (c)   Using the comparative advantage of large cities in spreading development to adjacent lagging areas;

    (d)   Using State land allocation policies as a tool for promoting a spatially balanced development, especially with respect to the allocation of land for new industrial parks, universities, medical institutions, airports and tourist sites;

    (e)   Curtailing urban sprawl and improving urban management by formulating long-term structural plans and fostering compact urban development in existing urban centres, thereby ensuring a more efficient use of existing infrastructure and public utilities.

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Source: ESCWA, based on the Ministry of Economy and Planning, "A National Spatial Strategy for Saudi Arabia", available at: http://www.mep.gov.sa/index.jsp;jsessionid=B4028FB35E70018D1465BCAF6AAFDD05.alfa?event=Article View&Article.ObjectID=56 (last accessed on 6 May 2011).

6. *Syrian Arab Republic*

Efforts to promote balanced national development can also be observed in the Syrian Arab Republic. Interestingly, however, the country has not elaborated a national spatial plan. Rather, it has opted to invest in regional spatial planning and in setting a spatial development framework for each region. These regional frameworks are aligned with the "economic focus of the established national planning work".[44] Hence, in line with the Government's national reform agenda, the regional planning frameworks call for "more decentralization, a greater role for the private sector, new forms of cooperation between the public and private sector agencies, and close coordination among the sector ministries".[45] The institutional reform agenda of the Syrian Arab Republic is further emphasized by placing regional planning under the Municipal Administration Modernization (MAM) programme of the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment (MLAE), which has been undertaken with the assistance of the European Union.

More specifically, regional planning in the Syrian Arab Republic is deemed important in filling a policy gap, given that it is located at an intermediate level of decision making, between the national and the local levels. The main purpose of the regional plans is "to strengthen the role of the governorates in preparing and implementing policies and major projects with a strong spatial and environmental emphasis".[46]

The Regional Spatial Development Plan for the Eastern Region, which covers the Governorates of Deir-ez-Zor, Ar-raqqa and Al-hasakeh, was the first regional planning project carried by MLAE. This region was chosen owing to its lag behind other regions in the Syrian Arab Republic; and the plan aims to enhance the potentials of that region, thereby reinforcing "the development framework for the region which has been laid down in the Tenth Five Year Plan".[47]

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[44] Municipal Administration Modernization (MAM), "The Regional Spatial Development Plan For The Eastern Region: The Governorates of Deir-ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqa, and Al-Hasakeh" (August 2008).

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

The increased demand for urban services and infrastructure provisions, and the spread of informal settlements around major cities have prompted many governments in the region to design urban growth management strategies and invest in projects aimed at redirecting urban growth to new areas. Various urban growth management models adapted to national context are being applied in the region. These are outlined below.

1. *Egypt*

Egypt has implemented one of the world's largest "new cities" programme with mixed success. The programme was started in the mid-1970s, with the aim of creating a "new population map of Egypt" and intended mainly to shift the urban growth and population pressure away from Cairo. The implementation of these cities is still ongoing: a total of 24 cities have been constructed and plans for another 45 cities are underway. Generally speaking, however, Egypt's new cities programme has not achieved the intended goals owing to high financial outlays and to the fact that the new cities have failed to attract residents, especially those cities that are far from Cairo. While their target population was set at 5 million in 2005, the number of inhabitants of the new cities is estimated at fewer than 1 million, which corresponds to some 1 per cent of Egypt's population.[48] This failure can be largely attributed to the lack of amenities to attract skilled labour and to the lack of public transportation links to connect residents to Cairo where job opportunities are concentrated. While the Government has provided generous tax incentives to attract private investment to the newly created industrial zones, this was not matched by investments in infrastructure and social services. As a result, Egypt's new cities could neither attract skilled labour nor contribute effectively to decongesting Greater Cairo.

2. *Jordan*

In Jordan, the Government has linked subnational planning to the objective of labour-force restructuring. In the late 1990s and in an attempt to address some of the regional divides that exist between Greater Amman and other regions, particularly the southern part of the country, the Government embarked on a comprehensive planning process to transform the Aqaba region into a world class special economic zone and tourist destination. The plan was motivated by the strategic location of Aqaba on the Red Sea and the peace treaty that Jordan signed with Israel in 1994. Given that existing infrastructure and facilities were not up to international standards, Aqaba became subject to a massive urban transformation process aimed at enhancing the region's capacity to attract industries, businesses and an international as well as local workforce.[49]

3. *Saudi Arabia*

As mentioned above, Saudi Arabia's urban planning and management strategies focus on channelling urbanization away from the country's few primate cities to new or existing cities that have a growth potential, stemming either from their strategic location or from their rich natural resources. This strategy is consistent with the country's national development policies aimed at balanced growth and at minimizing the disparities between the different regions. The concept of new cities has been presented as a strategy to promote a "concentrated dispersion" of both the population and social services across the country. In fact, different types of new cities are being developed around existing cities across the country, with a focus on sectoral specialization, such as Riyadh industrial city and Medina's satellite towns.

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[48] The World Bank, *World Development Report 2009.*

[49] M.A. Kardoosh, "The Aqaba Special Economic Zone, Jordan: A Case Study of Governance" (ZEF Bon, January 2005).

The Al-Riyadh Development Authority (ADA) has devised a growth management plan set for the year 2020. It aims to reorganize Riyadh into five sub-centres that are located within a distance of 15-20 km from the historic city centre, albeit linked to it through major arterial roads. Riyadh's industrial zone is expected to create 70,000 jobs and attract $40 billion when fully developed.[50]

In Medina, the city administration has developed a regional plan aimed at reducing the pressure from the central part of the city by channelling urban growth into suburban areas around Medina. The plan, currently under implementation, proposes the construction of three satellite towns around the city and a new road network connecting them to Medina. The satellite towns can cater for a total population of 600,000 inhabitants, while at the same time providing job opportunities and urban actives to attract people to these new urban areas.

The concept of "development corridors" is also being applied in the country to reduce the primacy of big cities and redirect urbanization to existing small and intermediate cities in order to boost their competitive advantage. This approach is clearly aligned with national spatial policies that discourage the concentration of investment in one geographic location. At the same time, Saudi Arabia has adopted a combination of a "growth boundary approach", whose main objective is to regulate the supply and use of land while determining how and when it should be used. Given the institutional deficiencies of municipalities, it is the Government that has taken the lead in implementing urban growth boundaries.[51]

C. COMPREHENSIVE AND STRATEGIC CITY PLANNING

At the urban scale, some countries in the region have elaborated broad visions and development strategies to regulate and guide future urban growth, including, for example, Abu Dhabi 2030, Amman 2025, Cairo 2050 and Sana'a 2025. Typically, the initiation of these plans has been motivated by several factors, including as follows: (a) chaotic urban growth and the lack of a guiding official comprehensive city plan, planning standards and regulations; (b) lack of analytical studies that address the relation of the growing city to its regional or subregional context; and (c) lack of effective mechanisms to monitor and guide urban change. Once again, the specific objectives and strategies adopted by the diverse countries vary in relation to their different circumstances. Set forth below are two examples of the kind of urban planning initiatives taking place in the region.

1. *Egypt*

The challenges of urbanization and the failure of earlier master plans to manage urban growth have led the General Organization for Physical Planning at the Ministry of Housing in Egypt to launch a comprehensive spatial development strategy for several cities and metropolitan regions, including Cairo 2050, the Strategic Urban Plan for Alexandria City and the Strategic Plan for Rosata City. These plans are comprehensive in the sense of being aimed at promoting all the sectors linked to the built environment, including housing, slum upgrading, local economic development, services and infrastructure. They are also aimed at promoting the institutional, social and environmental dimensions of development, including urban governance, gender balance and issues related to vulnerable groups.[52] The institutional dimension of these plans specifically targets building the capacity of local governments through "training programmes for administrators and civic officials at departments and districts' levels, and for all other key actors, as appropriate, to enhance leadership qualities and promote the efficient plan implementation and management".[53]

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[50] M.D. Rasooldeen, "New industrial zone to create 70,000 jobs", *Arab News* (8 April 2010).

[51] S. al-Hathloul and M.A. Mughal, "Urban growth management: the Saudi experience", *Habitat International*, vol. 28, No. 1 (March 2004), pp. 609-623.

[52] F. el-Shahed, "Strategic Planning in Egypt: the Case of Rosata City", which was presented to the Expert Group Meeting on Bridging the Urban Divide in the ESCWA Region: Towards Inclusive Cities (Beirut, 25-26 November 2010).

[53] See the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Egypt, which is available at: http://www.undp.org.eg/ Default.aspx?grm2catid=25&tabid=152 (last accessed on 6 May 2011).

These comprehensive strategic plans are developed on the principles of participation, partnerships and capacity-building in line with a step-by-step, methodological process that involves data collection, assessment of existing conditions, setting future visions and goals, and formulating strategies and projects to realize the set visions and goals. A participatory exercise is typically carried out at the onset of the planning process to identify the collective strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) facing a city or an urban area. In Rosata City, for instance, the future vision focused on the industrial and tourist potential of the city. Hence priority has been given to the industrial and tourism sectors as well as towards improving the infrastructure and the built environment. A total of 36 projects cover major socio-economic sectors, including upgrading slums, building residential units, investing in school and hospitals, and manufacturing cruise boats to encourage tourism.[54]

<div align="center">

2. *Jordan*

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Amman 2025, which was drafted between 2004 and 2008, is a combination of a master plan and a strategic plan for the city. It incorporates national development priorities with concerns related to governmental reorganization and the city image.[55] The plan is first and foremost intended to guide the urban growth and physical development of the city, which has so far gone unchecked. At the same time, the plan is aimed at, among others, enhancing urban equity, improving the delivery of urban services and promoting capacity-building of local government and civic engagement. With a view to promoting a more inclusive city, the plan has also launched a series of innovative initiatives and employed a range of planning tools to realize its objectives (box 4).

Box 4. Amman 2025

Amman 2025 deploys both a preventive and a remedial course of action towards correcting the many urban inequalities that have accumulated over periods of urban rise and decline, and particularly preceding the City of Amman's amalgamation (the lands of Amman amounted to a total of 680 km^2 before amalgamation and 1680 km^2 following amalgamation). The main challenges facing the city can be categorized as twofold, namely poor planning practices and policy of the past; and the threat of destroying what remains of the city's character and urban well-being in the future. The underlying issues are as follows:

(a) *Need for inclusive housing*: Housing affordability in Amman is alarming. While the median family income is $10,000, the median housing unit price is around six times that amount, thereby making Amman one of the least affordable cities in the region. The plan proposes a wide and diverse range of housing options that cater to a spectrum of target users on an income level and social status on a "blind" basis. The new zoning bylaw introduced for the first time a range of varied residential designations whereby more flexibility is used in the development rights of residential land, placing more emphasis on how improved urban design could make better use of the land for development. In addition, a variety of different housing typologies can be applied in the same neighbourhood, ensuring a higher degree of diversity within the same neighbourhood;

(b) *Emphasis on mixed land use*: The plan emphasizes mixed use designation throughout the urban structure of the city. Mixed land use has been promoted through its formalization in the new zoning bylaw. The main aim is to apply a residential layer over existing commercial and office buildings along major urban corridors. Mixed land use generally promotes more diverse, egalitarian and enriching living environments, and enhances the sense of urban safety in a given neighbourhood. Mixed use also contributes significantly to the promotion of human modes of urban movement, particularly walking. Within that context, the plan aims to reduce commuting costs for half of Amman's population that does not possess a private car. The "live-and-work" housing scenario also promotes small businesses, thereby cutting off commuting costs, encouraging other environmentally friendly urban modes of mobility and reducing carbon footprint emissions significantly;

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[54] F. el-Shahed, op. cit.

[55] R.A. Beauregard and A. Marpillero-Colomina, "More than a master plan: Amman 2025", *Cities*, vol. 28, No. 1 (February 2011).

(c) *Widening the employment angle*: The plan supports a creative take on employment trends by facilitating access to new markets, activating existent yet dormant employment opportunities and allowing for jobs in residential areas. For example, in the new industrial designations, the plan introduces a transitional type of land use that encourages small businesses to grow amid residential neighbourhoods, thereby supporting the "live-and-work" concept. The plan also introduces the idea of "prestige industry", envisioning a greater regional role for the city in the information technology (IT) and research and development (R and D) sectors;

(d) *Making it accessible*: One of the main goals of the plan is the creation of an efficient, reliable and affordable transportation and transit system that connects both ends of the city. The transportation and transit plan proposes a multimodal public transport infrastructure that could cater to the needs of citizens according to the projections and phasing schemes as set by Amman 2025. This system includes a bus rapid transit (BRT) and a light rail transit (LRT) systems to enhance the urban connectivity of the city while eliminating the currently inevitable reliance on private cars as the prime mode of mobility. Moreover, commuting contributes to the empowerment of women and promotes a more active role of women in the workforce;

(e) *Equitable infrastructure*: The plan proposes a phasing scheme that takes into consideration the provision of infrastructure services based on need rather than on ability. In other words, the plan ensures the delivery of the necessary infrastructure regardless of how wealthy or poor an area is. This is one of the most important pillars towards an equitable city that provides a decent living to all its citizens. Another key goal of the plan is to improve the quality of open spaces in the city by upgrading the pedestrian network of pavements, routes and trails in the city. Currently, the vast majority of urban open spaces are concentrated in the western parts of the city or on wide stretches of land at the periphery;

(f) *Equity in development rights*: One of the most innovative ideas proposed in the plan is the so-called "Robin Hood policy". This policy requires urban developers to compensate municipal authorities for part of the financial gains arising from their development rights in the new land use and zoning bylaws.

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Source: ESCWA, based on a working paper by H. Maraqa (Amman Institute).

D. SLUM-UPGRADING PROGRAMMES AND TARGETED SPATIAL INITIATIVES

In addressing their growing urban problems and social inequalities, some countries in the region have been targeting geographical areas where problems exist. With the assistance of international organizations and civil society groups, some local governments, mainly in middle and low-income countries, are formulating and implementing slum-upgrading projects and programmes. These initiatives are based on integrated approaches to the development of dilapidated and poor local areas, which are in some cases part of a national slum-upgrading strategy put forth by the central government.[56] Often these programmes involve collaborative agreements between central and/or local governments and international aid organizations, and engage a multitude of public sector actors, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs).

This is the case of Cairo's Participatory Development Programme in Urban Areas, which is being implemented by the German Technical Cooperation agency in Egypt (GTZ-Egypt). This programme aims at providing technical support to governorates in Greater Cairo (namely, Cairo, Giza, Qalyoubia and Helwan), particularly with respect to the adoption and implementation of participatory development tools for the upgrading of informal areas.[57] This is equally the case of Sana'a informal settlements-upgrading programme, which is being carried out by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and the Municipality of Sana'a with the support of several international organizations (box 5).

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[56] ESCWA, "Status and Prospects of the Arab City: Urbanization and the Challenge of Slums (Part 1)" (in Arabic) (E/ESCWA/SDD/2008/4).

[57] K. Abdel Halim, "Inclusiveness through Participation: The Case of Informal Areas in Greater Cairo", which was presented to the Expert Group Meeting on Bridging the Urban Divide in the ESCWA Region: Towards Inclusive Cities (Beirut, 25-26 November 2010).

Typically, these programmes and targeted interventions focus on the physical upgrading of slum and informal settlements, and on providing them with infrastructure, public services and utilities. In practice, such upgrading initiatives vary in scope and scale, ranging from street paving and the provision of basic services (including, for example, drinking water pipes), to investments in improving the road network and connection of informal settlements to the rest of the city. They also include the regularization of the tenure status of informal settlements, thereby providing their dwellers with ownership rights, as is the case, for example, in Saudi Arabia.

In addition, many countries in the region are linking their slum-upgrading programmes to the following: (a) micro-finance and technical assistance programmes aimed at facilitating the access of low-income city dwellers to affordable finance for the purpose of housing upgrading; and (b) socio-economic development programmes aimed at capacity-building and at providing employment opportunities for poor and vulnerable groups. Some upgrading interventions involve the construction of alternative housing, such as new housing projects to relocate slums from different locations in Sana'a.[58]

Moreover, due consideration is given in some cities to linking informal settlements to the rest of the city through an improved road network. For example, Amman, Medina and Sana'a are focusing on public transport aimed at facilitating the movement of citizens from one part of the city to another.[59]

In tandem with slum-upgrading programmes, some governments are also defining urban growth boundaries and strategies (or containment strategies) to control urban sprawl and the spread of informal settlements. For example, responsible ministries in Egypt and Yemen are looking at the possibility of informal settlement expansion and are designing responsive strategies, which involve planning the fringes of the city ahead and providing them with basic services. Urban sprawl imposes significant demands on infrastructure networks, especially water and sanitation, and on natural environment. In order to cope with that issue, some countries are also encouraging higher built-up densities and more intensive development in city locations that are already served with infrastructure and utilities. This is the case of Bahrain, which, in view of the scarcity of urban land, has recently allowed high-rise construction in certain areas. Given that most land in the country is privately owned, the Government has started to invest into multi-storey public housing and is encouraging the private sector to do the same.[60]

Box 5. Sana'a 2025

With the support of the Cities Alliance Programme, the Municipality of Sana'a is developing a long-term city development strategy for sustainable development, namely, Sana'a 2025. One of three pillars of Sana'a 2025 is the alleviation of urban poverty through integrated upgrading of squatter settlements in order to provide secure land tenure, improved access to basic services and enhanced access to jobs. Five parallel studies were commissioned to support the formulation of the city development strategy. These studies focus on competitiveness, municipal finance, municipal management, urban planning and slum-upgrading. The slum-upgrading study recommends the following course of action:

(a) Update and reorganize the designs of the areas that accommodate squatter settlements;

(b) Conduct field studies to identify the needs and type of the challenges;

(c) Review the regulatory and legislative aspects of the type of land ownership;

(d) Prepare a cost study for the improvement of squatter sites;

(e) Mobilize funding resources;

(f) Improve and qualify squatter sites, including by providing infrastructure services and public services in order to improve the living and environmental standards of the residents;

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[58] Y. al-Awadhi, "Sana'a Informal Settlements", which was presented to the Expert Group Meeting on Bridging the Urban Divide in the ESCWA Region: Towards Inclusive Cities (Beirut, 25-26 November 2010).

[59] ESCWA, E/ESCWA/SDD/2008/4.

[60] Ibid.

(g) Improve the economic situation by organizing trade and investment opportunities;

(h) Activate the role of small-scale industries;

(i) Implement the housing policy aimed at covering the housing demand.

Many slums are seen as an issue of human safety, especially given the reputedly frequent fires; and city authorities have opted to demolish many slum pockets and relocate their inhabitants to new areas. This is the case of the Akhdam slum area, whose inhabitants were moved to a resettlement project in Sa'wan where the Government purchased land and constructed small, single-storey housing units with courtyards. The housing units are connected to water and sanitation services, and the area was planned with sufficient education and health facilities as well as other social services.

The Social Fund for Development (SFD) and other donor and development agencies implemented slum-upgrading programmes that address the socio-economic development needs of the inhabitants. For instance, SFD supports onsite upgrading, as opposed to demolition and relocation, and is currently preparing a study to determine the area's infrastructure and socio-economic development needs. This idea is especially relevant given that there are currently no free resettlement housing units and no concrete steps have so far been taken to provide alternative housing.

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Source: ESCWA, based on a working paper by Y. al-Awadhi.

E. INVESTMENTS IN SOCIAL SPACE

Some cities in the region are investing in public-space upgrading. For example, the Greater Amman Municipality has recently redesigned and retrofitted Rainbow Street and Wikalat Street to cater to pedestrians. Such initiatives are sometimes seen as attempts to break down social barriers.[61]

Another example is the Souq Waqif Project, which was commissioned and supervised by the Emiri Diwan authority in Qatar and that involves renovating and redeveloping the old market area and its surroundings. Since the implementation of the Project, the Souq has become alive with shoppers, tourists, merchants and residents, both nationals and expatriates, where they can intermingle regardless of their income or social status.[62]

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[61] Y. el-Sheshtawy, "Urban Dualities and the Role of Urban Planning and Management".

[62] Ibid.

IV. THE REALITIES OF SPATIAL INTERVENTION:
INCLUSIVE OR EXCLUSIVE GEOGRAPHIES?

There is no doubt that many governments in the region are aware of the crucial need for inclusive and balanced development and there are many good initiatives in that regard. There are, however, some difficulties in moving from principles to effective action. A critical overview of spatial planning interventions taking place in the region sheds lights on limited responses to the growing urban inequalities. This is mainly due to the following: (a) an entrepreneurial style of planning; (b) reactive or inactive responses to urban problems; (c) uncoordinated and fragmented urban interventions; (d) regulative and top-down approaches to urban development and management; and (e) structural obstacles at different levels of urban policymaking and implementation.

A. AN ENTREPRENEURIAL STYLE OF PLANNING

As mentioned above, the decline of the welfare role of the State combined with economic liberalization, market deregulation and the privatization of the service sector have contributed to the emergence of an entrepreneurial style of planning. At the same time, globalization forces and the increased competition between cities have generated a broad interest in modernization plans and image renewal projects aimed at enhancing the competitive advantages of cities at regional and international levels. Indeed, across the region, the quality of local environments is considered crucial for economic growth and development. This is manifested by the proliferation of lavish architecture and urban design projects. Even the strategic urban plans that some cities in the region have recently launched are primarily geared at enhancing the city image. Consequently, they are focused on grand urban visions that do not necessarily respond to the visions of many local residents (box 6). Despite their broad social, economic and environmental objectives, many of these plans display contradictory tendencies and conflicting concerns that amplify rather than reduce socio-spatial divisions.

At the same time, driven by competitiveness and entrepreneurialism, many planning interventions that are taking place in the region sometimes prioritize the interests of powerful groups over public interests.[63] While the national development strategies of many countries in the area stress the objective of balanced development across the various governorates or city regions, the skewed allocation of public resources and the lack of adequate urban management policies are broadening urban and social divisions, and are placing the poor and vulnerable groups as well as middle-income groups at a greater disadvantage. This is manifested in the process of gentrification and economic segregation that accompany many projects, including luxury shopping malls and gated communities. For example, Musheireb in Doha's city center is set to gentrify the area in order to transform it into a mixed-use "fashionable district capable of attracting professionals".[64] Alarmingly, however, those who have been evicted from the area have not been offered alternative locations.[65]

The examples described in boxes 6 and 7 below further highlight the spatial divisions and social inequalities that can be observed in the region, and illustrate how mega urban visions and real estate developments are simultaneously transforming the spatial structure of the city and changing their land use mix and social composition, particularly through the displacement of lower-income groups and migrant workers. It is also interesting to note that in trying to be comprehensive, some urban regeneration schemes in the region involve serious trade-offs between, for example, social decisions and environmental concerns and/or between cultural and economic concerns. This is the case of the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) Project, which could not attain its environmental goals as this would have resulted in the

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[63] See, for example, M. Ben Hamouche, "The Changing Morphology of the Gulf Cities in the Age of Globalisation: The Case of Bahrain", *Habitat International*, vol. 28 (2004), pp. 521-540.

[64] Y. el-Sheshtawy, "Urban Dualities and the Role of Urban Planning and Management".

[65] D. Lepeska (2010). "Doha's old shops left behind by progress". *The National*. June 18, as cited in Y. el-Sheshtawy, op. cit.

closure of many existing companies. In addition, many such projects often contribute to accentuate the division of the city along income lines (box 8).

Box 6. Cairo 2050: slum relocation and gentrification

Cairo 2050, which was launched in 2009, is intended to turn the city into a pleasant environment through a series of interventions, including by replacing the el-Arafa cemetery by a 12-km long strip of gardens and parks, thereby creating a green lung in the heart of the city.[a/] The project aims to promote sustainable socio-economic development and "revive the position of Cairo as the first capital within the Middle East through increasing its competitiveness in several economic and urban aspects and by implementing several mega development projects and linking those projects with an integrated public transportation system".[b/] In addition, the plan focuses on improving the living conditions of the city inhabitants, especially those living in slums and informal settlements.

However, the implementation of the plan will involve significant relocation processes. According to a report by Amnesty International, the plan has identified 26 areas in Greater Cairo as "unsafe" on the basis of a study that estimated that 17,600 families lived in imminent danger of death in Manshiyet Nasser alone.[c/] The report also noted that about 6,300 families from the neighbourhood had been relocated to alternative housing since the rockslide of 2008, although in many cases there were concerns that they had been forcibly evicted.

At the other end of the spectrum is a planned and controversial scheme for a segment of downtown Cairo. A consortium consisting of Egyptian and Saudi investors is engaged in buying up property with the purpose of redesigning it for higher-income residents. The consortium president noted that "there are some segments of society that may not be able to enjoy downtown".[d/]

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Source: ESCWA, based on a case study by Y. el-Sheshtawy.

a/ Mondiaal Nieuws, "Cairo 2050: ambitious plans, threathened population", which is available at: http://www.mo.be/index.php?id=340&tx_uwnews_pi2%5Bart_id%5D=27429&cHash=f97de1f67b (last accessed on 6 May 2011).

b/ Based on a presentation by M. Madbouly, "The Strategic Urban Development Plan for Greater Cairo Region 'Cairo 2050'", which is available at: http://www.kate-stuttgart.org/zmskate/content/e4302/e6016/e6033/Madbouly_ger.pdf. (last accessed on 6 May 2011).

c/ Amnesty International, "City officials convicted over deadly Cairo rockslide" (28 May 2010), which is available at: http://www.amnesty.org/fr/node/16956 (last accessed on 6 May 2011).

d/ M. Bradley, "Critics say Cairo plan will make rents too expensive", *The National* (17 July 2010), which is available at: http://www.thenational.ae/news/worldwide/africa/critics-say-cairo-plan-will-make-rents-too-expensive?pageCount=0 (last accessed on 6 May 2011).

Box 7. Abu Dhabi Plan 2030: moving labourers to the outskirts

Abu Dhabi Plan 2030, which was launched in 2004, pledges to turn the city into a "contemporary expression of an Arab city". In addition to its desire to expand the business district and create new business and governmental centres, the Plan addresses the need for the provision of a variety of housing types to cater for national citizens and for low-income (expatriate) residents. The Plan also elaborates on the objectives of urban identity, sustainability and respect of the natural environment; and presents land use, building heights and transport schemes for the city.

The Plan stresses that Abu Dhabi will be a sustainable city not just from an environmental but also social perspective. However, some proposed interventions are clearly directed at eliminating urban informality. For example, the Plan proposes to destroy the Central Market and replace it with a high-end luxury retail centre, and to relocate the traditional fish market. The proposed location of workers' accommodations in sites far removed from the city further emphasizes spatial stratification along income lines. In fact, the Government is currently engaged in building more than 12 so-called "labour cities" aimed at accommodating more than 300,000 workers. These are expected to be completed by 2012. According to officials, "the goal is to move all labourers out of Abu Dhabi's centre and into designated facilities outside town that are safer and more comfortable than most current camps".[*]

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Source: ESCWA, based on a case study by Y. el-Sheshtawy.

* B. Reagan, Brad, "New era begins for worker housing", *The National* (19 September 2010).

Box 8. Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority

With the growth of tourism and resort facilities, especially five-star hotels and mega residential resorts, Aqaba is becoming a more socially, culturally and economically divided city.

The poorer old town population is being relocated to new city expansion areas with better housing and communities facilities. This is generally considered a positive development both environmentally and socially for the city's lower income groups. However, the poorer more original Aqaba population groups are being segregated from the "high-end" housing, waterfront resorts and new luxury communities areas of northern Aqaba. While this is the normal economic segregation that occurs worldwide, the two main entities in charge of Aqaba development and management the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) and Aqaba Development Corporation (ADC) will need to pay special attention to creating a cohesive city, one offering opportunities and a high quality of life to all its residents as well as its visitors. With the regional tensions likely to remain high for many years to come, maintaining social and cultural tolerance and cohesiveness will continue to be a major challenge to ASEZA and the city generally.

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Source: Adapted from J.M. Cobb, "Aqaba Planning, Urban Design, Infrastructure, Public-Private Partnerships and Project Implementation Urban Redevelopment, Expansion and Environmental Management (2004-2010)".

B. REACTIVE AND INAPPROPRIATE RESPONSES TO URBAN PROBLEMS AND INEQUALITIES

Many countries in the region have addressed the issue of inclusive development in their national development policies. However, poverty reduction, land reforms, low-income housing and slum upgrading are not necessarily national priorities in all countries. Moreover, where pro-poor policies have been devised, these have not always been successful. By and large, the limited ability of national policies to address the problems of the urban poor and to respond to the growing socio-economic inequalities can largely be attributed to the inadequacy of adopted urban socio-spatial policies and to the limited capacity of the authorities responsible for their implementation.

At the same time, the failure of national policies to respond to the growing urban problems and inequalities can be attributed to inappropriate conception and responses to urban problems. For example, slum-upgrading initiatives and urban management plans are in many cases more a matter of city beautification processes than an issue of inclusive development strategies. A narrow understanding of urban challenges is also reflected in premature strategies to reverse rural-to-urban migration and in views that punish informality and informal settlements, regardless of their contribution to urban socio-economic development. In addition, slum-upgrading strategies that impose arbitrary regulations escalate the problems that the urban poor face in finding an affordable home in the city and/or land for housing. The slum-upgrading initiatives taking place in the region often focus on palliative actions, as opposed to addressing the root causes of poverty and inequality.

For example, in Sana'a, it is only when informal construction activities start that responsible authorities try to prevent informal development by preparing and publishing detailed plans for those areas.[66] Given the lack of proactive planning, containment policies that aim at curbing the expansion of informal settlements are not always successful. Hence, when poor urban dwellers are forced out of a certain area, they are likely to establish new informal settlements and slum pockets in other areas in the future. This problem takes another dimension in Egypt where urban dualities and stark divisions that are observed in Cairo can be linked to inappropriate policy responses that fail to address the needs of the majority of the urban poor.[67]

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[66] Y. al-Awadhi, "Sana'a Informal Settlements".

[67] Y. el-Sheshtawy, "Urban Dualities and the Role of Urban Planning and Management".

C. Uncoordinated and fragmented urban interventions

Laissez-faire attitudes and weak public institutions, in combination with vague urban planning directives and ineffective urban management mechanisms, have resulted in fragmented and uncoordinated spatial interventions that amplify rather than solve existing urban problems and contradictions. Specifically, the "projects-preceding-plans" approach that many cities in the region follow has yielded isolated urban development. In several Gulf cities, new developments on artificial islands have generated a lot of debate regarding their social and environmental impact in the long run.

Despite the increasing recognition of the need for comprehensive and integrated planning approaches, a sectoral approach to planning persists in the region. Hence, economic, spatial, social and cultural dimensions of urban planning are still tackled as separate issues, and overviewed by different public agencies. For example, some middle and low-income countries in the region "have allocated important financial resources towards infrastructure, such as electricity, water supply and roads. Yet in many cases, […] the provision of near universal access to potable water [takes place] without a parallel development of the sanitation networks which was historically the case in rural areas and small cities in Egypt especially in the southern parts of Egypt".[68]

Similarly, there could be improvements in the way that Cairo's informal settlements-upgrading strategies are implemented. While these strategies are holistic in their conceptual approach and objectives, the upgrading of some areas has not been integrated into the overall urban development process of the city. As a result, the upgraded settlements "remain cut-off and divided from the rest of the city by the construction of urban infrastructure works, such as transport and other infrastructure corridors aimed at modernising Cairo".[69]

D. Regulative and top-down approaches to urban development and management

Urban policies in the region are characterized by a regulative and top-down approach, and the absence of an institutional set-up that could effectively engage all concerned groups in the process of city planning and management. As a result, urban planning remains chiefly focused on constructing normative and prescriptive operational frameworks.

In many cases, urban visions are elaborated without proper public participation or through technocratic processes that primarily involve more affluent groups. The failure to engage less visible groups in decision-making is often attributed to the difficulty to implement participatory processes at the grass-roots level. In reality, involving less affluent groups is deemed difficult given that their interests are clearly conflictive with the interests of wealthy developers and potential investors. At the same time, the lack of established communication channels between civil society organizations and local and central governments have excluded the former group from the decision-making process.

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[68] M. Madbouly, "Revisiting Urban Planning in the Middle East North Africa Region" (2009), which was prepared for the *Global Report on Human Settlements* and is available at: http://www.unhabitat.org/grhs/2009 (last accessed on 6 May 2011).

[69] B. Mumtaz, "Bridging the Urban Divide in the ESCWA Region".

E. STRUCTURAL OBSTACLES

Good initiatives, when and where these exist, are likely to be faced with several structural obstacles, as set forth below.[70]

1. *Lack of resources*

The financial resources allocated to municipalities are not always aligned with the objective of attaining balanced national development. The problem of financing local initiatives becomes very acute where municipalities are entirely dependent on funding transfers through the central government, and are unable to raise their own funds to implement priority local projects. More specifically, the strong centralization in the countries of the region leaves local governments in a weak position, being unable to respond to local demands and needs.[71] At the same time, the insufficient human and technical resources of municipalities and their institutional deficiencies render the implementation of decentralization agendas very challenging. As a result, planned interventions aimed at inclusive development are often unable to be implemented. This is, for instance, the case of Lebanon, where "a comprehensive planning policy was devised to address the slum problem at the southern edge of Beirut, but it has not been implemented since its elaboration, mainly for financial and political reasons".[72]

In the case of the middle and low-income countries of the region, a reliance on financial aid to implement spatially targeted initiatives, such as slum-upgrading projects, has also not been easy or sustainable. Typically, external funding is concerned with visible results and ceases after the implementation of pilot initiatives, practically with no funding left for their maintenance. Again, the inability of local governments to raise sufficient financial resources to maintain good initiatives jeopardizes these initiatives and any attempts at scaling-up.

2. *Overlapping institutional mandates and lack of coordination*

In addition, there is a problem of overlapping institutional mandates and administrative tensions between local and central government departments over urban planning and management responsibilities. In many cases, there is a legal ambiguity regarding who is responsible for what. For example, the several laws and presidential decrees that exist in Yemen have allocated urban planning functions to different governmental bodies. The ambiguities over responsibilities surface during the implementation phase of urban plans, when the conflicting mandates and weak coordination between the various accountable entities tend to undermine actual implementation. Similarly, the implementation of urban plans is often constrained by the lack of experts and accurate data and, in some countries, by pressures from donors and international organizations.

3. *Constitutional limitations and conflicting jurisdictions*

The limited statutory functions of municipal authorities, constitutional limitations to their political autonomy and often conflicting jurisdictions of adjacent municipalities all constitute major problems to the cities of the region. In some cases, municipal authorities have little control over land development falling within their jurisdiction, and no control over land development outside their administrative boundaries. The problem takes on more serious dimensions in Palestine, where dealing with the issue of land is very delicate, given the limited possibility for urban expansion.[73]

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[70] This is s common problem in many developing countries, including those in the ESCWA region. See Development Planning Unit (DPU), *Sustainable Urbanization: Bridging the Green and Brown Agendas* (University College London, 2002).

[71] Ibid., p. 230.

[72] M. Harb, "Unbalanced Growth and the Challenge of Inclusive Development".

[73] R. Khamaisi, "Planning and developing a new Palestinian urban Core under conditional Israeli Occupation: Ramallah City". *Paper presented to the forty-second ISoCaRP Congress*, 2006.

V. A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

The spatial policies and planning experiences of the countries of the ESCWA region reflect varying degrees of success in addressing the socio-economic inequalities that exist within their confines. More sustainable responses to the considerable demographic, social, economic, physical, environmental and political challenges taking place in the region have yet to be articulated. Of course, there are no "one-size-fits-all solutions". Responses have to be geographically specific and tailored to the specific circumstances and needs of each country. There are, however, some common principles and policy options that could be considered by governments at both national and local levels in the course of articulating strategies aimed at bridging the urban divide and promoting more inclusive cities.

A. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles can be summarized as follows:

(a) Spatial development cannot be left to market mechanisms alone. Without proper guidance, market forces could accentuate uneven geographic development patterns and existing socio-economic disparities. National governments are therefore encouraged to reassume a central role in leading and regulating spatial development processes and in guiding private sector interventions, including in the provision of housing or key urban services;

(b) Bridging the urban divide requires governments to promote balanced national development not necessarily through a balanced distribution of projects and financial resources but rather through the following: (i) universal or spatially blind social policies; (ii) spatially integrative policies that support the integration of leading and lagging areas, including economic development strategies that rely on inter-municipal and intergovernmental cooperation, and on pooling the resources of cities and their surrounding hinterlands; (iii) spatially connective policies that facilitate and encourage people's mobility, notably through investments in road infrastructure and public transportation systems; and (iv) spatially targeted policies, such as interventions aimed at stimulating economic growth in lagging areas;[74]

(c) The objective of promoting inclusive development also requires good participatory governance based on the principles of sustainability, subsidiarity, equity of access to urban resources, efficient public service delivery, transparency, accountability and civic engagement. More specifically, the limited resources of many central governments require them to:

  (i) Mobilize a wide range of actors and resources and forge effective partnerships at all levels, namely between the various tiers of government; between the public and the private sectors; and between public and private actors and civil society organizations, including poor and marginalized urban groups;

  (ii) Devolve the responsibility for controlling, monitoring and managing local areas to city governments and the most affected and concerned community groups and support them, as required, to implement envisioned development plans;

  (iii) Promote and empower local action mainly by decentralizing funding and ensuring that sufficient resources are made available to municipalities in the form of public funding; and by enacting fiscal adjustments that enable municipalities and local bodies to diversify their sources of revenue and raise additional funds for local urban development;

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[74] This framework has been partially inspired by arguments that were presented in the World Bank, *World Development Report 2009*.

(d)   For effective and sustainable interventions, governments need to move away from reactive to proactive responses to urban problems, and embrace cross-sectoral and integrated planning approaches that ensure complementarily of spatial planning processes and social, economic, cultural, environmental and institutional development concerns;

(e)   The effective implementation of balanced development objectives also requires governments to establish appropriate institutional and legislative mechanisms in order to ensure that proposed national policies aimed at balanced territorial development are effectively implemented at the appropriate level of government.

B.   Institutionalizing inclusive development: required courses of action

The process of institutionalizing inclusive development principles in spatial planning and policy formulation and implementation implies a fundamental shift in the way that cities are planned and managed. For this to happen, it will be crucial to undertake the following:

(a)   Invest in institutional development and capacity-building at all levels and scales (national, subnational and local): this entails developing the technical and organizational capacity of ministerial and municipal departments responsible for urban planning and management, supporting their financial autonomy and strengthening their vertical and horizontal coordination mechanisms through building institutional networks and linkages between the various tiers of government;

(b)   Promote public learning and experience sharing (at the international, regional and national levels): this can be achieved as follows: (i) by institutionalizing "city-to-city cooperation" and peer-learning initiatives within national spatial planning policies; (ii) by strengthening technical cooperation with non-governmental institutions and organizations working in the region for the purposes of information sharing and dissemination; and (iii) by encouraging universities, think-tanks and research institutions to assume an active role in documenting and complying successful and innovative local initiatives and establishing an empirical knowledge base;

(c)   Endorse collaborative, bottom-up urban planning processes (subnational and local level): such processes promote a systemic and responsive understanding of urban challenges and opportunities, and can better respond to local needs. This implies the following: (i) engaging local actors (local government, citizens and developers) in setting visions for their cities and in decisions that affect their livelihoods and living environment; (ii) giving voice in the decision-making process to all urban dwellers, including marginalized groups; (iii) acknowledging community-led action; and (iv) partnering with communities and strengthening their collective action and existing networks;

(d)   Identify and reform exclusionary planning practices, regulations and administrative procedures in ways that further regional balance and respond to public interests;

(e)   Commit to inclusive development and acknowledge the right to the city to all its citizens, including the poor and marginalized, by enacting a range of targeted spatial and non-spatial policies that address the root causes of poverty and social exclusion, such as slum improvement, infrastructure development and improving the access of low-income groups to public transportation and basic social services.

C.   Concluding thoughts

Spatial policies, planning and management certainly have a vital role in bridging the urban divide and in promoting more inclusive cities. However, they are not enough on their own. Spatial intervention needs to be placed within a broader agenda aimed at wider processes of social integration and institutional reform. Within that context, the countries of the region need to: (a) reassume a central welfare state role; (b) adopt

sustainable and "socially determined patterns" of urban development that is driven by a genuine concern for human well-being and a desire to maximize people's choices and ability to access available and new opportunities; and (c) enact transformative and progressive redistribution policies that address the root causes of poverty, inequality and social exclusion.

First and foremost, the realization of such an ambitious agenda requires political will and commitment to the objectives of balanced and inclusive development. Secondly, it requires serious institutional reforms that can ensure that positive initiatives are mainstreamed and effectively implemented at the appropriate administrative level. Without these essential ingredients, spatial interventions are likely to remain fragmented and insufficient to respond to the needs of the majority of urban dwellers and their right to the city. What is at stake here is social justice, without which our cities will be at eminent risk of social crisis, revolt and civil uprising.

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