

# Lebanon updates

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## IN THIS ISSUE

- Local and national stakeholders commit to promote a Barrier Free Environment for the Disabled People 2
- Fostering networking between municipalities on Local Urban Observatories 2
- 26 municipalities are taking part in UN-HABITAT municipal capacity building program 3
- Urban Youth to Benefit from UN-HABITAT's Two Million Dollar Opportunities Fund 4
- Habitat Country Program Document 2008-2009 4

FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

UN  HABITAT

## Local and national stakeholders commit to promote a Barrier Free Environment for the Disabled People in Southern Lebanon

**T**housands of people with physical disabilities are unable to access new buildings being reconstructed in Southern Lebanon, according to a new report released here.

Assessments conducted by UN-HABITAT in cooperation with technical offices in the unions of Tyre, Jabal Amel and Bint Jbeil in Southern Lebanon revealed that accessibility for people with disabilities to public spaces and buildings, as well as to private houses, had not been taken into consideration in the reconstruction work going on in the towns.

The findings were presented during a consultative seminar entitled “Towards a Barrier Free Environment”, which was held on May 8, under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities

and co-organized by UN-HABITAT, the three unions of municipalities and the Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union.

The seminar was a follow up to another meeting organized by UN-HABITAT in March 2008 on “Enhancing Post-War Shelter Reconstruction”, which pushed for mainstreaming of accessibility in the reconstruction process, an issue that was largely ignored by concerned international, national and local stakeholders.

The seminar also focused on the various legal, technical and financial requirements to apply engineering accessibility measures, and the role of the international community as well as the government to promote a barrier free environment.

Presentations were made by key speakers representing unions of municipalities,

the NGOs, the Italian Cooperation, the Dutch Embassy in Lebanon and the United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon. The representative of the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities presented highlights on the incentives it was providing to encourage municipalities to implement engineering accessibility measures to voting booths.

The seminar was part of UN-HABITAT’s two-year project entitled “Good Governance for Enhanced Post War Reconstruction” which is co-funded by the Dutch, Cyprus and Finnish Governments. It was part of efforts to bring together Government, civil society organizations and the donor community in Lebanon to develop a cooperative approach to address emerging post-war reconstruction needs in southern Lebanon. ♦



*Attendants in the consultative seminar*

## Fostering networking between municipalities on Local Urban Observatories

**I**n an attempt to facilitate the exchange of experiences between local authorities involved in setting up Local Observatories in Lebanon, UN-HABITAT in cooperation with the Al Fayhaa Union of Municipalities (Tripoli, Mina and Beddawy) organized a one-day study tour on February 2009

in Tripoli gathering 35 elected leaders and staff from 24 municipalities.

The initiative came to complement UN-HABITAT strive to strengthen the capacities of municipalities to collect, develop and make full use of accurate, practical and locally verified informa-

tion. Availability of reliable data represents a key requirement, which would allow local authorities turn collected information into good policies and urban plans.

While UN-HABITAT process for setting up three Local Observatories in the ▶

unions of municipalities of Tyre, Bint Jbeil and Jabal Amel was launched, the study tour comes at a crucial time to learn from Al Fayhaa Union of Municipalities ten-year experience in dealing with the various technical and administrative aspects of Tripoli Environment and Development Observatory (TEDO).

By the end of this study tour, municipalities from Southern and Northern Lebanon agreed on practical procedures to create a permanent networking platform to continue exchanging experiences and sharing lessons on observatories in their concerned localities.

This initiative came to complement the UN-HABITAT initiative establish three local urban observatories in cooperation with the three unions of municipalities of Tyre, Bint Jbeil and Jabal Amel. The observatories include several key urban indicators with verified information and are integrated into a GIS platform. Those indicators would allow municipalities to assess their needs and gaps and consequently improve their planning capacities. ♦



35 elected leaders and staff from 24 municipalities meet in Tripoli

## 26 municipalities are taking part in UN-HABITAT municipal capacity building program

In an effort to promote sustainable recovery in war affected regions of Northern Lebanon and Southern Lebanon, UN-HABITAT is implementing an integrated municipal capacity building program targeting elected councils, municipal staff as well as CBOs and NGOs representatives in 26 municipalities.

The program seeks to enable affected communities to participate actively and effectively in the reconstruction and rehabilitation phases of war affected regions. It covered training topics dealing with: key competencies for improving local governance, municipal finance and municipal management (including archiving), strategic planning and conflict management.

In Southern Lebanon, the municipal capacity building was launched in January 2009 and is implemented in cooperation with the training institute “For Development” and is targeting elected municipal councils, municipal staff and volunteers in 21 municipalities in Tyre, Bint Jbeil and Marjeoun Cazas.

In Northern Lebanon, UN-HABITAT and UNDP (through an Italian funded program), in cooperation with the International Management and Training Institute (IMTI), recently closed a six-month capacity building program that targeted

the six municipalities surrounding Nahr El Bared Camp for Palestine Refugees. The closing ceremony was organized under the auspices of the Minister of Interior and Municipalities and took place in May 2009 in Deir Amar Municipality. During the ceremony certificates were distributed to a total number of 108 beneficiaries representing members of municipal councils, municipal staff as well as CBOs and NGOs representatives.

Although the training program contexts and objectives are similar in North and South Lebanon, however, the implementation approach differed from one region to another. In Southern Lebanon, a strong Training of Trainers (ToT) component was designed and implemented. This led to a successful selection of 15 local trainers who took part in the delivery of training courses. In Northern Lebanon, the program focused on providing coaching assistance through on-the-job training. Municipal members and staff were provided with the opportunity to translate the acquired knowledge, skills and competencies into applied exercises that fit their direct needs.

By the end of the program, UN-HABITAT in cooperation with the two training institutes would develop and compile training toolkits that will be distributed to municipalities in Lebanon. ♦



Closing ceremony of the Capacity Building Program in Northern Lebanon

## Urban Youth to Benefit from UN-HABITAT's Two Million Dollar Opportunities Fund

Urban based Youth-led organizations in developing countries who are working to improve the living conditions of their communities can now apply for financial assistance from UN-HABITAT.

The Opportunities Fund for Urban Youth-Led Development will provide grants between \$5,000 and \$25,000 to organizations led by young people, aged 15-32 years.

"In this time of worldwide economic crisis, it is not only banks and auto-makers who deserve financial support, we also need to encourage youth who are often best placed to solve problems in their communities", said Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT. "The Opportunities Fund is

designed to provide financial support of up to one million dollars per year, to youth-led initiatives aimed at sustainable urbanization. We must harness the energies of the young if we are to overcome the problems of urban poverty". Of the one billion slum dwellers in the world today, it is estimated that more than 70% are under the age of 30. Yet these young people have few resources available to improve their own living environment. This is a major oversight as there are many youth-led initiatives in slums and squatter settlements that are in urgent need of financial support.

The Opportunities Fund for Urban Youth-Led Development has been established with support from the Norwegian Government specifically to provide funds to youth-led community initiatives. The initial grant is for two

million dollars over two years with a possibility of renewal.

The fund is committed to support innovative youth-led projects in areas such as employment, education, environment, health and safety. Applications from organizations partnering with government agencies and the private sector are encouraged. Projects promoting gender equality are particularly welcome. ♦



Opportunities Fund for Urban Youth-Led Development

Applications details are now available at [www.unhabitat.org/opfund](http://www.unhabitat.org/opfund).

## Habitat Country Program Document 2008-2009

The Habitat Country Program Document (HCPD) for Lebanon was developed covering the period 2008-2009. The HCPD outlines the main objectives and priorities for UN-HABITAT in Lebanon and aims to promote the Habitat Agenda in collaboration with the Lebanese Government and other UN Agencies.

UN-HABITAT in Lebanon plays an active role in mainstreaming various urban issues within local and national programmes. Through an analysis of key urban sectors including Governance, Land and Housing, Shelter and Basic Services, Urban Planning and Management, the Environment and Capacity Development, the Lebanon HCPD provides an overview of the national policy context and the intervention areas to address

urban development challenges.

The main objective of the UN-HABITAT Country Program for Lebanon is to focus on long term development strategies. Collaborating with the Government in coordination with other UN agencies operating in the country, UN-HABITAT expects to consolidate a comprehensive program to address governance and reform issues.

Based on the above strategy, the Country Program encompasses the following four components:

- Sustainable rehabilitation of human settlements.
- Participatory urban planning.
- Urban Governance.
- Pro-poor Housing reforms. ♦



HCPD is now available at [www.un.org.lb](http://www.un.org.lb)

### Partners



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### Donor Agencies

