

# Second Palestinian Urban Forum

The **Second Palestinian Urban Forum (PUFII)** was organized by the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) in partnership with United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), and Birzeit University under the slogan "Localizing the New Urban Agenda: Shaping the Future of Palestinian Cities." The event took place at Birzeit University on October 30/31, 2017, with a preliminary session in Gaza City on October 25, 2017.

The following recommendations are presented as a follow-up to PUFII.

## At the National Level

**1. Complete the National Spatial Plan (NSP) for the State of Palestine, and update the Regional Plan for the Gaza Strip (GS):** Complete the NSP to functionally link the GS with the West Bank (WB). Furthermore, update the regional plan for Gaza.

**2. Implement large-scale development schemes in the GS to bridge the development gap:**

- Establish industrial and free-trade zones
- Rebuild the international airport, and the seaport
- Develop the natural wells in Gaza
- Complete reconstruction efforts related to the recent wars
- Increase scope and level of cooperation between the civil society organizations in the GS and the WB
- Invest in the Mediterranean Sea as an economic national resource

**3. Focus on East Jerusalem and Area C of the WB:** Plan for East Jerusalem and Area C of the WB as integral parts of the territory, roll out the rights-based approach to planning in Area C, and integrate this approach into the Palestinian planning practices and regulations

**4. Address the Needs of Palestinian Refugee Camps:** Mobilize financial resources to support the development of refugee camps on the basis of social equity

**5. Review Regulatory Frameworks:** Update and modernize laws and regulations in the Palestinian territories

## Action to Be Taken at the Level of Sectoral Strategies

### • Environment Quality Authority:

- Cooperate to outline environment-friendly and energy-saving strategies
- Include the *Strategic Environmental Assessment* and health-environment considerations in urban developmental planning processes
- Increase national-level awareness of sectoral-based considerations and criteria
- Change orientation toward programs, and work on enabling the local employment and inclusion of green elements in urban design
- Prioritize interventions to respond to climate change

### • Ministry of Economy:

- Take note of the contribution of the informal economy, while supporting a sustainable transition to the formal economy
- Foster livability and a vibrant urban economy
- Revisit the legal relationships between municipalities and the providers of basic services in a more plausible way
- Accentuate catalytic policies for private businesses and investments

- Adopt solutions that are doable within the business environment of East Jerusalem and Area C of the WB

### • Ministry of Finance and Planning:

- Develop affordable housing-finance procedures
- Increase the revenues of local government units to support urban development
- Promote transparent policies and financial and administrative frameworks and procedures for financial transactions, and provide a computerized information system

### • Ministry of Public Works and Housing:

- Apply national policies for integrated and gender-responsive housing to respond to the housing needs and rights to adequate housing

### • Palestinian Land Authority, and Land and Water Settlement Commission:

- Encourage the land registration process, as land property is a main component of human stabilization, particularly in Palestine

### • Ministry of Agriculture:

- Support urban agriculture and farming
- Enable accessible networks of local markets and commerce

### • Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities:

- Leverage natural and cultural heritage in cities and communities, both tangible and intangible
- Safeguard and promote culture
- Develop environmental paths and tourism routes

### • Ministry of Women's Affairs:

- Include women in the preparation of urban policies to ensure social equity, including women's empowerment
- Establish networks among female members of local authorities at the national and international levels

### • Ministry of Education and Higher Education:

- Form an inter-ministerial committee to review, amend, and recommend new policies that better link academic specializations with market needs
- Establish mechanisms for cooperation between Palestinian universities and the private sector in order to scale up synergies in the development process

### • Ministry of Local Government:

- Revisit the definition of spatial locations and relationships between communities, and encourage the development of joint areas
- Prepare the *National Urban Policy* under the framework of the *National Spatial Plan* and in light of the commitments to localize Goal 11
- Include local government units in the local economic development process, and increase financial revenues through PPP
- Adopt a disaster-risk management mechanism in order to reduce vulnerability and build resilience, responsiveness, and capacity in this field
- Promote the use of digital platforms in addition to the application of the "Smart City" concept
- Enable participation of communities in the planning and implementation of planning policies and budgeting, and facilitate access to public information
- Establish mechanisms to increase communications between universities and ministries