

MANAMA DECLARATION ON CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

1. The second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), 1996, marked, for the first time in history, that Heads of State and Government had gathered to recognize the importance of sustainable human settlements and adequate shelter for all and to give these goals the highest priority into the twenty-first century. The *Istanbul Declaration* and the *Habitat Agenda* reached a new consensus to place people at the centre of our concerns for sustainable urban development and pledged to eradicate poverty.
2. Fully aware that justice & equality can only be achieved in adopting rights-based policies for the development of our human settlements, we note with satisfaction the constant efforts made by the Governments of our region in meeting this goal. We further note with satisfaction, of the decision taken by the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on Human Rights to appoint a Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing (E/CN.4/RES/2000/9)
3. We welcome the initiative of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), as focal point of the United Nations system for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, in launching the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure, including initiatives addressing upgrading and regularization of slums and squatter settlements. We also welcome and commend UNCHS for the launch of the Global Campaign for Good Urban Governance to ensure transparent, responsible, accountable, just, effective and efficient governance of small, mid and large-size cities.
4. We, representatives of governments of the Arab countries, the representative of local authorities and the WACLAC meeting in the capital of Bahrain, Manama City, at the regional preparatory meeting for the follow-up to the implementation of Habitat Agenda (Istanbul +5) reconfirm our strong belief that small, mid- and large-scale cities are engines of growth and incubators of civilization and that rural and urban areas are interdependent economically, socially and environmentally and linked through the movements of goods, resources and people.
5. We are further committed, in light of the Habitat Agenda, the Istanbul Declaration, and the new policies and strategies on human settlements. These policies are based on enablement and partnership, and on empowerment of civil society organizations and the strengthening of local authorities.

6. Taking into consideration the specificity and variability of the economic and social realities of our region, we renew our commitments to work toward eliminating poverty in our urban and rural human settlements and exerting special efforts to improve the living conditions of the poorest segments of our societies.
7. Aware of the scarcity of some vital resources in our region, such as water, we reaffirm our engagement toward the mobilization and efficient use of these resources, in addition to the provision of safe water to all population including the poor areas. We also confirm to formulate the relevant long and medium term policies that satisfy the needs of the present and future generations.
8. Fully cognizant of the fact that sustainable and prospectuous human settlements can only be achieved in peace time. We are engaged to support and cooperate in the creation of an environment conducive to a just and comprehensive peace in our region.
9. Supporting the Arab and international solidarity concerning the status of the Holy city of Jerusalem as an Arab City and the liberation of the Palestinian Occupied Territories, we call for consolidated regional and international efforts to support the Palestinian cities and villages under occupation and particularly the Holy City of Jerusalem.
10. We reaffirm once more our commitments to the following:
 - (a) Strengthening of the enabling urban and rural human settlements strategies and reinforcing the principles of partnership and participation.
 - (b) Working toward full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing as stipulated by the Habitat Agenda and the international legal instruments within the framework of local legislation.
 - (c) Recognizing the local authorities as our principal partner in the implementation of Habitat Agenda, and promoting decentralization in strengthening the financial and institutional capacities of the local authorities.
 - (d) Introduce, develop and adapt legislation to include all partners in the implementation process of Habitat Agenda and increase cooperation with the Parliamentarians, private sector, Non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations including youths.
 - (e) Working towards enabling and further enhancing the role of women in the decision making process.
11. We commit ourselves to launch and support the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure and the Global Campaign for Good Urban Governance in our countries as two strategic points of entry for an effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda.
12. Recognizing the utmost importance of identifying a suitable legal instrument that regularizes the relationship with the local authorities, we are committed to develop, and actively be involved in the process of the World Charter of local government.

13. Acknowledging that International Cooperation and collaboration gain an added significance and importance in the light of recent trends in the globalization and interdependence of the world economy. Equally, aware of the need for the political will of all States and for specific action at the regional and international levels to establish, inspire and encourage new forms of cooperation, partnership and coordination at the country-to-country and city-to-city levels. We underline the importance of increased investment from all sources, including the private sector, in order to contribute effectively to the improvement of shelter conditions, especially to the needy countries in our region, taking into account the diversity of the human settlements needs and international opportunities.

14. We reconfirm the role of the Commission on Human settlements and UNCHS (Habitat), in cooperation with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and other relevant social and economic commissions, the UNHCS Advisory committee on Local Authorities, Arab local authorities, the Arab Towns Organization and other partners in the following:

- a) promoting, reviewing, monitoring and assessing the progress made in implementing the goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in our countries;
- b) reviewing best practices, urban indicators, enabling policies, legislation and action plans for upgrading human settlements;
- c) identifying illustrative cities that will be demonstrative platforms for the UNCHS (Habitat) two campaigns on Secure Tenure and Good Urban Governance; and
- d) further advancing the normative debate on major human settlements issues in our countries.

Manama, Bahrain, 18 October 2000