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**REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON DATA CAPTURING METHODS AND
REPORTING OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INDICATORS
IN ARAB COUNTRIES**

Cairo, Egypt

3-5 July 2018

INFORMATION NOTE

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Regional Workshop on the Collection, Elaboration and Reporting of Human Settlements Indicators in Arab countries

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Introduction and Background Information:

According to the United Nations Population Division (2014 revision of the *World Urbanization Prospects*), 54 per cent of the world's population lives in urban areas. This percentage is projected to reach 66 per cent by 2050¹ since living in urban areas is attractive due to availability of public and social services and job opportunities. In Arab countries, about 56 per cent of the population lives in urban areas, ranging from 34 per cent in Sudan and Yemen to 99 per cent in Qatar in 2014. The proportion of urban population in both Sudan and Yemen is projected to rise to 50 and 54 per cent respectively by 2050. Some Arab countries are experiencing complex political and socioeconomic conditions including armed conflicts, leading to the partial destruction of main cities and resulting in large influxes of refugees and internally displaced persons to other cities, whether in the same country or in neighboring countries.

Integrated and long-term sustainable urban development requires good planning, effective governance and legal frameworks, strong institutions, high capacity of local authorities and the availability of sound monitoring mechanisms. Consequently, and due to the rapid changes taking place in the Arab region, cities require monitoring and evaluation systems based on indicators, baseline data, goals and targets to support urban development plans and policies, procedures and programs, especially with the adoption of the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. In addition, cities require periodic assessments of their development status and accurate tools to evaluate policy outcomes and the impact of specific plans and actions.

Within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) along with UN-Habitat Programme (UN-Habitat) and the UN Regional Commissions are conducting a project for the strengthening of national and local capacity in human settlements indicators, specifically those pertaining to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 "Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable". The project aims at enhancing national and local capacity in collecting, analysing and reporting on human settlements indicators, including the use of new spatial data and GIS platforms. UN-Habitat – through its Global Urban Observatory - has been leading the coordination of the statistical work on tools development, data collection and monitoring of the Human Settlements Indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other global agendas especially the New Urban Agenda (NUA). As such, UN-Habitat developed a series of guidance documents/tools for member states, national statistical agencies, urban planners and all other partners that will support capacity development for monitoring human settlements indicators. These include the indicators metadata and training modules, the National Sample of Cities

¹ <https://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Publications/Files/WUP2014-Report.pdf>

approach, the urban observatory model which complement the City Prosperity Initiative (CPI) and its related index that the Agency developed in 2012 to measure the sustainability of cities and to be used as a global monitoring platform for urbanisation and urban well-being and prosperity.

At the global level, UN-Habitat organised the “First Technical meeting on Human Settlements Indicators for SDGs: Assessing gaps in the production of human settlement indicators” in Kenya from 13 to 17 February 2017 in collaboration with UN Regional Commissions. The meeting reviewed challenges and possible strategies for monitoring human settlement indicators specifically those related to methodology, definitions, partnership arrangements with NSOs, capacity development, IT technologies, etc. It provided an opportunity to reach a common understanding of the inter-related nature of SDG 11 and other human settlement indicators through hands-on reviews for each of the urban related SDG indicators. The meeting also covered key cross-cutting issues such as the CPI to measure urban development, national sample of cities approach, data disaggregation, gender mainstreaming, etc.

At the regional level, in December 2016, Arab countries have endorsed the Arab Strategy for Housing and Sustainable Urban Development 2030 as a guiding framework for national urban policies. They also announced the Arab Declaration for the New Urban Agenda. Moreover, the UN-Habitat Regional Office, the United Nations Development Programme in Kuwait and the Higher Planning and Development Council of Kuwait, organized, in collaboration with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) and Kuwait Foundation for Scientific Advancement, the “Regional Workshop on Using CPI Initiative in Monitoring SDG11 in the Gulf States” from 21 to 25 May 2017. The meeting concluded with a number of recommendations, the most important of which are: mainstreaming the CPI and its indicators into the national statistics systems to allow the alignment of local and national priorities and policies with global and regional development agendas including the SDGs, the New Urban Agenda and the Arab Strategy for Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, while taking into consideration national specificities; building the capacity of staff in national statistical offices and urban observatories on the most updated tools and methodologies for data collection, verification, analysis, reporting and dissemination; and promote cooperation between national and local data producers to ensure consistent reporting by each country on progress made towards the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

In the context of SDG 11 indicators, the priorities of Arab countries differ from the rest of the world. Natural disasters are rare in the Arab region whereas man-made disasters are common. In addition, there is a difficulty in providing SDG 11 indicators compared to indicators related to other Goals. Therefore, some indicators will need joint efforts at both regional and national levels, particularly the measurement and methodologies issues, metadata, and cooperation among different national stakeholders for the use of modern technologies, including geographic information systems. In general, the monitoring and reporting of the SDG 11 presents major challenges that other SDGs do not necessarily confront. Consequently, a mixed bag of approaches is necessary to address the data needs for city/urban indicators particularly where the city is the unit of analysis. In order to address these challenges, it is important to increase

capacity-building efforts at different levels and develop efficient partnerships among various stakeholders.

Within the framework of the project and as a follow-up to regional efforts, a series of regional workshops will be organised by the respective regional commissions, in collaboration with UN-Habitat, to introduce and discuss the New Urban Agenda (NUA) including the CPI, with the aim to monitor the progress made towards the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and ensure accountability, and how to use new spatial indicators and GIS platforms. In this context, ESCWA, in collaboration with UN-Habitat's Global Urban Observatory (GUO) and the UN-Habitat Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS), is organizing a "Regional Workshop on the Collection, Elaboration and Reporting of Human Settlements Indicators in Arab countries", including spatial data, in Cairo during the period 3 to 5 July 2018.

A. Objectives

The main objective of this regional workshops is to strengthen the capacity of National Statistical Officers, Ministry officials, city level decision-makers, urban experts and practitioners on the collection, analysis and reporting on human settlements indicators in the Arab region. Specifically, the regional workshop will aim to achieve the following goals:

- Increase understanding of the data requirements and the methodology for monitoring and reporting on human settlements indicators and their level of disaggregation; including means of data collection, validation and filling in statistical gaps for unavailable data in Arab countries;
- Increase understanding of tools and methodological approaches developed as part of the monitoring and reporting of human settlements indicators (e.g. CPI, National Sample of Cities approach);
- Discuss the New Urban Agenda (NUA), monitor its implementation and evaluate available methodologies;
- Strengthen local and national coordination mechanisms in the collection, elaboration and reporting of human settlements indicators in Arab countries;
- Discuss relevant good practices and potential challenges at the regional level;
- Identify capacity-building plans for Arab countries on the collection and elaboration of human settlements indicators.

Expected outcomes:

- Strengthened capacity of staff from national statistical offices, city authorities, local urban observatories and service providers, in the identification of statistical gaps, collection, classification and analysis of data, and the periodic reporting on selected human settlements indicators in several countries and cities, with a particular focus on indicators of sustainable urban development.
- Development of action plans and means to collect data related to the implementation of SDG11.

- Development of follow-up mechanisms to serve Arab countries in statistical capacity-building.

B. Participants

The target group for the workshop is staff from national statistical offices, city authorities, and local urban observatories and service providers. The workshop will also be attended by representatives from UN-ESCWA, UN-Habitat and its Regional Office for Arab States, and experts from other international and regional organizations.

C. Main topics of the workshop

The workshop consists of the following main topics:

- (i) Overview of the current methods used to collect data on human settlement indicators (SDG 11 and related indicators), the availability of data and challenges faced by countries in producing such data;
- (ii) Tools and methodological approaches for monitoring and reporting on human settlements indicators (CPI, National Sample of Cities);
- (iii) Methods of data collection on spatial indicators, including statistical capacity-building and potential challenges;
- (iv) Best practices in Arab countries and selected countries outside the Arab region, for the integration and analysis of data on human settlements indicators;
- (v) Action plans and means to enhance the collection and elaboration of indicators of SDG 11.

D. Documents

The Urban Development Plan, Agenda 2030, Executive Framework of the New Urban Plan, Framework for Monitoring Goal11, City Prosperity Initiative and National Sample of Cities approach and Human Settlements Indicators, experts' papers and countries' presentations.

E. Language

The workshop will be conducted using both English and Arabic languages. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided during the meeting.

F. Venue and time of the workshop

The meeting will be held during the period 3 to 5 July 2018 at Semiramis Intercontinental Hotel, Cairo, Egypt (Tel: +202 27988000, Fax: +202 27988015, Web: www.intercontinental.com).

G. Administrative arrangements

Participants are kindly requested to make their own arrangements to get the visa from the Egyptian embassy in their home country (if needed).

ESCWA will make the necessary administrative and logistical arrangements. For more information regarding the logistical arrangements, kindly contact: Mrs. Nada Moudallal at the following e-mail nmoudallal@hotmail.com or Ms. Zeina Sinno at the following e-mail sinnoz@un.org.

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