

In this edition, we are glad to highlight the work addressing key issues such as housing, sustainable urban development, climate change resilience, the enhancement of Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) rights and land governance. These initiatives contribute to a broader strategy aimed at stabilization, development, peacebuilding, and facilitating durable solutions for displaced populations and returnees to ensure their voluntary, safe, and dignified resettlement.



REHABILITATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF HOUSES

Adequate housing is the first step towards sustainable returns for vulnerable displaced populations. In the first quarter of 2024, 153 houses in the villages of Old Tel Banat, Mam Elias, Nisryiah, and Shihabyiah in Sinjar, were fully rehabilitated and handed over to their respective families as part of the project funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). On a mission to the site, led by Muslim Qazimi, Head of UN-Habitat Iraq, visited the beneficiaries during the initial weeks of the returnees' settling back into their homes and listened to their stories, signifying the conclusion of their displacement period.

While one phase of housing rehabilitation was completed, a new programme aimed at assisting the Government of Iraq in providing safe, affordable, and suitable housing was launched. "Building Equitable and Inclusive Transformation (BEIT): Towards Decent Work and Affordable Housing in Iraq" is a multi-agency programme funded by the European Union (EU) and led by UN-Habitat Iraq, implemented in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Trade Centre (ITC).

FORMALIZING HOUSING, LAND AND PROPERTY RIGHTS IN IRAQ

Promoting Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) Rights and supporting the Government of Iraq to ensure equitable access to these rights for all Iraqis is a priority within the current context of transitioning from a humanitarian response to long-term development and establishing pathways to durable solutions. Funded by the European Union, KOICA, and the Government of the Netherlands through LAND-at-Scale, UN-Habitat is advancing multiple projects in this area, reaching stakeholders at multiple levels.

Among the key components being addressed are: increasing awareness of HLP rights and access to compensation at various community levels, building capacities within a high-level executive committee tasked with implementing the legal decree issued by the Council of Ministers to formalize HLP rights, and facilitating improvements in land management by promoting a transition to an e-land administration system. This effort was reinforced with the launch of a new program titled "Modernising Urban Land Knowledge (MULK): Transitioning to E-land Governance in Iraq," funded by the European Union.



STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

UN-Habitat honours the trust placed in its work by operating with complete transparency, and always welcoming donors to site visits when requested. During this period, the team hosted His Excellency Hans Sandee, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Iraq, on his visit to Sinjar. This visit enabled him to directly observe the field activities and interact with the beneficiaries of the project supported by the Government of the Netherlands through LAND-at-Scale. Moreover, His Excellency Matsumoto Futoshi, Ambassador of Japan to Iraq, welcomed the UN-Habitat team in Baghdad at a meeting focused on discussing the collaboration for the initial phase of the social housing project in Mosul, the "Japan Village", funded by the Government of Japan, and anticipating future steps.



PUBLIC AND GREEN SPACES

Public facilities and green spaces play a crucial role in restoring a sense of normalcy, strengthening community life, and fostering urban regeneration. Within the first quarter of the year, UN-Habitat, in collaboration with UNFPA, inaugurated the first Women Protection Centre in Mosul and started to build a new one in Ramadi, both funded by the Government of France. Additionally, in response to community requests for a communal living space, a new public park in the Jurf Al Meleh Neighborhood, Basra City, started to be constructed. Covering an area of 13,000 square meters, his initiative is supported by the European Union.



CAPACITY-BUILDING

UN-Habitat conducted the "Urban Geoportal for the City of Basra" workshop, empowering teams from Basra's Governorate and Municipality to increase their technical capacity and improve governance capabilities. The workshop focused on identifying and addressing critical urban issues such as water provision, sewerage distribution, electricity coverage, and more, through data-driven and participatory methodologies.

SUPPORT TO INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE AND RETURNEES

In collaboration with local authorities in Mosul, UN-Habitat is developing a residential area designated for returnees as part of Mosul's Master Plan. This project, funded by the Government of Japan, will support the construction of social housing units alongside establishing secure access to basic public infrastructure for residents. Additionally, it will promote vocational training and outreach campaigns on climate change adaptation.

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

The "Improved Resilience to Transboundary Sand and Dust Storms in Kuwait and Iraq" project, financed by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), has decided to use biological fixation techniques to mitigate the spread of sand and dust in Southern Iraq. This strategy aims to decrease the intensity and counts of the activities from two major hotspots, which are responsible for up to 40% of the sand and dust storms in the Arabic Gulf countries.

The decision was based on recent findings from Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, UN-Habitat's partner in the project.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The call to action for International Women's Day in 2024 was "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress." In response, UN-Habitat Iraq emphasized its commitment to empowering women through adequate housing. This includes prioritizing their participation in housing rehabilitation projects and securing their right to equal access to HLP rights, as women and girls often face multiple and intersecting challenges that differ from those of male IDPs and returnees.

WASH INFRASTRUCTURE

To address the urgent need for access to clean and potable water, tackle water scarcity, and prevent flooding during rainy seasons, stormwater and water networks are under construction in three neighbourhoods in Basra City: Jurf Al Meleh, Al Kubiyah, and Al Ahrar. Through this initiative funded by the European Union, approximately 16,000 individuals will benefit from the upgrading of the water infrastructure.

ACHIEVEMENTS PLAYLIST

To document and showcase the outcomes of the recently concluded one-year project titled "Recovery Support to Returnees in Iraq to Strengthen Socio-Economic Stabilization, including Improved Food Security," funded by the Government of Japan, a series of videos highlighting the project's main components and achievements was produced. A playlist assembling all the videos, featuring ongoing processes and interviews with collaborators, authorities, and beneficiaries is now available on the UN-Habitat Iraq YouTube channel.

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* UN-Habitat, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, is the focal point for all urbanization and human settlement matters within the UN system and has been active in Iraq since 1996.