

Regional Preparatory Meeting on
Sustainable Urbanization
Kingdom of Bahrain, 1-2 June 2008

Key Messages to be delivered to the ECOSOC Meeting, New York, July 2008:

- We call the decision makers and takers to comply with MDGs with special concern for the right of safe water and hygienic sanitation and to put water and sanitation on their top priorities.
- We believe that food crisis is the international community struggle and efforts should be exerted to overcome the high prices of food by remapping the agricultural and urban planners with more appropriate irrigation systems and crop structures.
- We believe that a percentage of oil revenues should be used towards supporting integration to produce food and secure water and energy affordably in the Arab region.
- Sustainable urbanization starts with the human infrastructure of cities. People are the foundation of good urban planning, effective long term design for urban infrastructure: how people live, how they work and produce, how they travel in the city and how they build their homes and enterprises, all from the bases of sustainable urban environment.
- Urban development should reflect the environment, education and housing dimensions, as urban development means tackling the problems of housing, poverty and inefficient education. It is essential to apply the concept of Education for Sustainable Development in Poor Urban.
- We should have the full and fair partnership between concerned parties to encourage the economical and social development strategies.
- Capacity building, data bases, accurate statistics and information are main factors to achieve the urban development on concrete bases; "Information is power".
- The voices of local communities should be heard in the international events through the CSOs as main actors in urban development through all stages: planning, preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

- Affordable prices of services and suitable quality are crucial factors for sustainable urban development.
- According to the reality of more than one third of the Arab world population are living in slums and informal settlements; We call the private sector and infrastructure service providers to pay more attention to poor urban communities in their 'green building' designs and projects with most appropriate techniques and affordable prices.
- There is a need to pay attention to rural-urban linkages. One of the components of urban growth is rural migrants. Ignoring the needs of rural population will result in:
 - a) Revolution/discontent
 - b) Resort to minimum agricultural subsistence
 - c) Rural migration
- There is a need to pay attention to sustaining the livelihoods of rural population, which will assist in slowing down the rate of formation of informal areas (squatter/slum settlements)
- Sustainability is about the rights of coming generations but also respecting the rights of our ancestors, i.e. protecting cultural heritage for preserving our identity. Middle-eastern cities were cradles of civilization and it is a must to protect and preserve our heritage. The case of Aleppo – Syria is an excellent example to emulate.
- Promote and facilitate urban productivity through procedure simplification and securing tenure of land and real estate.
- We are keen to play our essential role hand in hand with all concerned parties to achieve sustainable urbanization. We do believe that unemployment, women issues, citizenship, safe water and proper sanitation, healthy 'green' houses, good governance, education, municipal solid waste management and renewable energy are on our daily agenda and we are totally in charge of sensitizing the communities towards them. But we do need the necessary support from all our partners and donors to be in a full partnership with us.

Submitted by : Essam Nada, Executive Director, AOYE/RAED