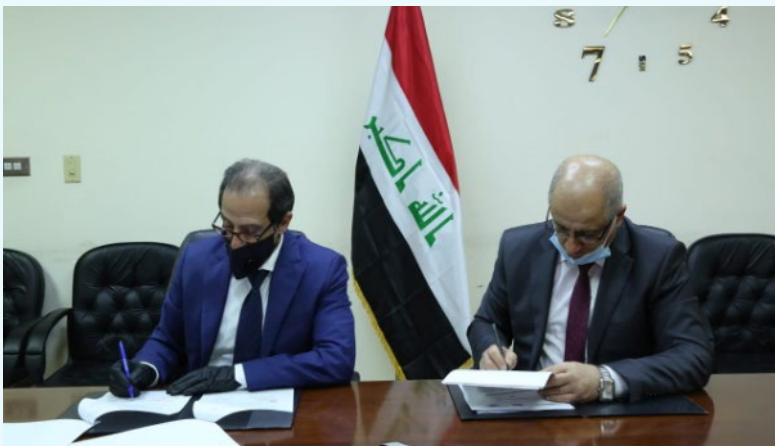


UN-Habitat Partnership with the Ministry of Planning

On 4 November 2020, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the Ministry of Planning and UN-Habitat to confirm their partnership and commitment to work together on informal settlements. This MoU was signed following the meeting of the Steering Committee on the National Programme for Informal Settlements, chaired by H.E. Dr. Khalid Battal Al-Najim. Currently in Iraq, approximately 3.5 million people reside in more than 4,000 informal settlements across the country. This could potentially be exacerbated further by the movement of IDPs without durable solutions, as it has the potential to increase the number and/or size of informal settlements if IDPs can't find adequate housing.

One of the main challenges concerning informal settlements is the lack of updated and comprehensive information. In 2017, for the first time in Iraq UN-Habitat and the Ministry of Planning defined the boundaries of informal settlements in 15 governorates of Iraq based on analysis of the satellite imageries using geographical information system. This allowed the relevant government authorities to obtain basic information on informal settlements, such as their number, location, size and population. As the next step, H.E. Minister of Planning announced during the meeting that the Ministry, with technical support from UN-Habitat, will plan for a comprehensive survey on informal settlements. Collaboration with private sector will also be sought to improve housing and living conditions in informal settlements.



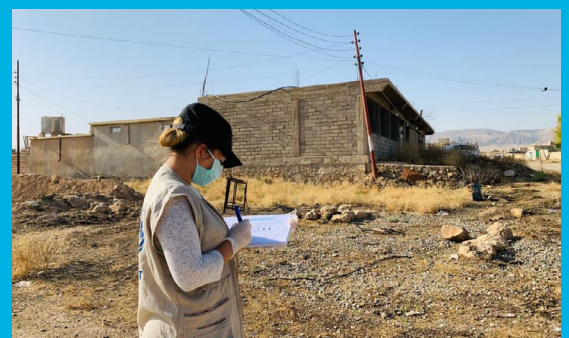
Green Building and Environmental Sustainability

UN-Habitat organised a two-day training on 'Green Building and Environmental Sustainability' in Mosul for technical staff from the Municipality, Governorate officials, University professors and staff members of the Vocational Training Centre. The training was delivered in partnership with KESK (the word 'kesk' means 'green' in Kurdish), a female-led green building consultancy company based in Erbil.



Yazidi Land Rights

In the 1970s, approximately 100,000 Yazidis were forcefully relocated from their Sinjar mountain villages to the residential complexes located across Sinjar District under the Arabization policy pursued by the Ba'ath regime. Since then, these Yazidis were not allowed to register the assigned land under their names and consequently they never owned official documents to prove the ownership or occupancy of their land and houses. During the conflict with ISIL, these Yazidis were again forced to be displaced from Sinjar. Even after the liberation of Sinjar, they face a major challenge to return because they cannot prove their land and house ownership, or occupancy rights using official documents. UN-Habitat has been addressing these challenges faced by Yazidi people in Sinjar. Utilizing specially designed surveys based on the unique context of Iraq and based on community consultation, over 5,900 housing, land and property right claims have been registered and more than 5,000 Occupancy Certificates have been issued for Yazidi households returning to Sinjar. Endorsed by the local authorities as well as community representatives, these Occupancy Certificates serve as an important first step to formalize Yazidi land rights.





The Importance of Public Spaces for Children

As we approach the celebration of #WorldChildrensDay on 20 November, UN-Habitat pays homage to the many children that have enthusiastically taken part to its consultations over the transformation of open spaces, making sure that their cities are more inclusive and sustainable. In Mosul, Heet and Yathrib, UN-Habitat is working closely with the local municipalities championing the rights of children and young people to have access to safer, better maintained, and more enjoyable public spaces in their neighbourhoods. Given the opportunity to partake to design initiatives, children are assertive and creative. Children can also become key advocates for public spaces and innovative types of open-air activities, such as for example the temporary transformation of vacant land into Iraq's first pump track for BMX (motocross) bikes that UN-Habitat is realising in Heet.

Job Creation in Sinjar

Job creation is one of the overarching priorities for UN-Habitat in Iraq during the current challenging COVID-19 pandemic. During the month of October, UN-Habitat Iraq has completed a community WASH infrastructure project in Sinjar and this initiative has created a total of 907 working days for skilled and un-skilled labour. The project connected 323 houses in Al-Shuhadaa neighbourhood to the municipal water network.



Low-Cost Housing Units in West Mosul

During the conflict with ISIL, more than 29,000 houses were fully destroyed. While substantial efforts are made on rehabilitation of partially damaged houses, most IDPs whose houses were fully destroyed beyond repair are left without support on their housing. Since 2017, UN-Habitat has been working on construction of 'low-cost housing units' to accommodate returnees whose houses were fully destroyed. The low-cost housing sites are constructed in urban areas to provide durable solutions and support returnees to rebuild their lives.

Mandate

UN-Habitat, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, is the focal point for all urbanization and human settlement matters within the UN system and is mandated by the UN General Assembly (beginning in 1975) to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities. Its mandate is further derived from other internationally agreed upon development goals, including SDG11 of the Sustainable Development Goal, a goal dedicated for urban development, and the New Urban Agenda, an action-oriented document signed by member states which sets global standards of achieving SDG11. UN-Habitat has been active in Iraq since 1996.



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