

COUNTRY PROFILE

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# Morocco

**UN**  **HABITAT**  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE





# FOREWORD

UN-Habitat has been cooperating with Morocco since 1995 on national and local programs in the field of sustainable urban development. Today, in order to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 11 - “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” – and to mobilize Morocco towards Habitat III, UN-Habitat engages in development challenges in cities, promotion of decent housing and improvement of basic services and development of an urban and regional environmental framework. Since its establishment this cooperation and partnership have directly involved four key ministries and nearly twenty cities in the Kingdom, as well as helped with capacity building of national and local stakeholders. In its work UN-Habitat supports ministries and national agencies as well as municipalities with operational projects, national strategies, technical expertise and capacity building through: (i) an integrated approach on territorial issues; (ii) bridging the urban divide; and (iii) the participation of stakeholders in decision-making and implementation of programs. The cooperation between the Kingdom of Morocco and UN-Habitat is taking place against a set of specific urban challenges.



**Monceyf Fadili**  
Advisor UN-Habitat Morocco



# URBAN ISSUES

Population	33.85 million	(2014)
GDP Growth per year on average	4%	2011-2013 <sup>1</sup>
Inequality adjusted Human Development Index rank	129/187	(2013) <sup>2</sup>
Urban Population	60%	(2014) <sup>3</sup>
Population Growth Rate	1%	(2014) <sup>4</sup>
Urbanization Growth Rate	2%	(2014) <sup>5</sup>
Proportion of urban population living in slum areas	from 8.2% to 3.9%	(2004) to (2010) <sup>6</sup>
Youth population (15-24)	19.8%	(2010) <sup>7</sup>

## Dynamics of Urbanization

As of 2014, the overall population size of Morocco had increased from 11.6 to 33.8 million inhabitants since the first general census of population and housing took place in 1960. During this period, the size of the urban population multiplied five times while the size of rural population increased by only 1.5 times. The share of the urban population was around 29% in 1960. Due to the growth of the urban population, migration into the cities and the expansion of the urban perimeter it reached up to 67% in 2015<sup>8</sup>. While the growth of the urban population between the 1982 and 1994 censuses amounted to nearly 400,000 inhabitants per year, the increase slowed down between 1994 and 2004 and was steady between 2004 and 2014 with a level of about 310,000 inhabitants



Kasbah of Oudayas - UNESCO World Heritage (2012)

per year. The predicted pace of the growth decline is extended for the period 2014-2030 with an average annual growth of the urban population of 290,000 inhabitants. Conversely, cities were growing much faster between 1971 and 1982 with an urbanization rate of 0.73% per year. The urbanization rate dropped to 0.40% per year between 1994 and 2014, and it is expected that urban population growth will likely be further reduced to 0.30% per year between 2014 and

2030.

As far as rural-urban migration is concerned, the average annual net urban migration was only about 67,000 people between 1960 and 1971 to reach 102,000 people between 1994 and 2004. According to the Moroccan High Commission for Planning, the contribution of rural migration to the urbanization rate was reduced to 35% between 1994 and 2004 compared to 43% between

1 National Report – Habitat III

2 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/inequality-adjusted-hdi>

3 <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS>

4 <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&country=MAR&series=&period=>

5 <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&country=MAR&series=&period=>

6 Source: Ministry of Housing and Urban Policy

7 <http://www.eswca.un.org/popin/members/morocco.pdf>

8 The World Bank (2015): Urban population (% of total); <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS>



Informal settlement Carrières Centrales, Casablanca. The oldest slum in Morocco (1907), relocated from 2010 to 2012.

1971 and 1982. At the geographical level the allocation of human settlements is very disparate. Urbanization in Morocco has been marked by coastal development and urban growth mainly in the corridor Kénitra-Rabat-Casablanca-El-Jadida. Along this strip, which extends over 230 km, the concentrated urban population is estimated by the Ministry of Urban and Regional Planning at about 40% of the national urban population. According to the General Census of 2004, there were 351 cities and urban centres. 297 cities have a population below 50,000 inhabitants, while in the 54 remaining, the number of inhabitants

exceeds 50,000 people. The cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants, despite their limited number, concentrate more than 88% of the urban population.

### Demographic Change

The total fertility rate dropped by two-thirds within 40 years from 7 to 2.6 children per woman in childbearing age in 2011.<sup>9</sup> The speed of the second phase of the demographic transition that began in the late 1970s is attributed to the delay in the marriage age for women due to the noticeable progress in their access to education

and employment outside the home in addition to the extension of the use of family planning methods in both urban and rural areas. The rate of current use of contraception is estimated at 67.4%<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, in 2015 nearly 44% of the population is younger than 25 years and 18% of them was unemployed as of 2012.<sup>11</sup> Morocco needs an urban framework that is capable of absorbing and utilizing this potential, otherwise the youth bulge will become a source of unrest and instability.

9 Ministère de la Santé Royaume du Maroc (2011): Enquête Nationale sur la Population et la Santé Familiale (ENPSF); Rabat: 17

10 Ibid., 18

11 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mo.html>

## Urban Economy

The city is the driving force of economic development. It is the principal source of wealth creation with contributing more than 75% to the national GDP. A major source of tax generation for the state, it is also the place of hope and integration for many rural people. The city is also the place of modernity and preparation of citizens to face the challenges of the future. The big challenges facing the city include the creation of 250,000 jobs every year for the 15 years to come, compared to 150,000 currently. It's worth stating that in 2007, according to the High Commission for Planning, there were one million unemployed people in urban areas and more than three million urban dwellers were living in a difficult financial situation: 27% under the poverty line and 73% in a precarious situation.



Maroc Telecom in Hay Ryad, a new neighbourhood in Rabat

## Environment

Cities, with their vast and concentrated accumulations of people, new patterns of production and consumption pose a major environmental burden. They not only affect the environment directly, but also challenge municipalities' capacity to provide access to water and sanitation as well as solid waste management.

Risks associated with climate change and natural hazards in cities need to be better understood, and measures to increase resilience to the impacts of climate change and reduce disaster risks will be essential, and will necessitate cooperation between states on certain issues. Improved enforcement of building codes and disaster resilient construction methods and strengthened institutional capacity to do so is also very much needed. Therefore, in facing the ecological challenges and requirements of urbanization, UN-Habitat and the Kingdom of Morocco have to cooperate in developing a coherent strategy for sustainable urban development.

## Challenges Identified by the Moroccan Government

Morocco has committed to developing the national strategy of human settlements in order to absorb the accumulated undesired developments stemming from rapid urbanization and to meet future needs. This strategy focuses on four areas:

1. **Territorial planning** will focus on decentralization and will be based on a new and more appropriate local community development;
2. **Housing** will be based on a concept of integrated development of rural and urban housing, with priority to social housing and the development of small towns as well as easy access to housing through participatory approaches;
3. **Environmental issues** related to human settlements: housing, drinkable water, sanitation, transport and industry, disaster prevention, etc.;
4. **Social development** will be extended to pursue sustainable human development through providing help to poor and vulnerable groups at

the economic, social, health care and education levels.

## UN-HABITAT PROGRAMMES IN MOROCCO

Urbanization is characterized by a complex set of - sometimes contradicting - dynamics. Cities form the setting of everyday life for their inhabitants and at the same time are economic entities enmeshed in the global economy. To engage in urban development requires articulation of compromises between the interests of various social strata as well as considerations of environmental concerns.

In order to respond to urban growth, new cities constitute a new component of the urban fabric in Morocco and provide potential areas for spatial planning, economic activities and provision of adequate housing. By managing and planning urbanization, linking market demand to new labour pools and creating connected regional urban areas, these large integrated projects of urban extension respond to the societal needs generated by urban growth.

Informal settlements pose the biggest challenge to sustainable and inclusive urban planning and management, especially in peri-urban areas. Given their constant growth due to population growth and rural-urban migration, and various legal forms of land tenure, especially in urban centres, these settlements require interventions to address the existing situation and develop



instruments for preventing the creation and growth of informal settlements.

## Key Areas Identified for the Partnership 2013-2016

- Slum Upgrading and Informal Housing: Technical support to the “Cities without Slums” program – implementation of the Rabat Declaration: “Making slums history: a worldwide challenge for 2020”;
- New Cities: Support the coordination between operational entities in planning new cities in the frame of the implementation of the new Urban Policy Strategy adopted by the government in 2012; Contribution to the competitiveness and integration of clusters as new spatial areas for investments, jobs and wealth opportunities;
- Dissemination of Best Practices: Validation of successful operations resulting from slum upgrading programmes and new cities: (i) at national level for better visibility on public policies; (ii) at international level, within the framework of South-South cooperation;
- Global Conference on Al-Omrane Holding (HAO) Program Evaluation: The main goal is to enhance the action of HAO for access to housing for all. The contribution of successful experiences at regional level can be a good asset to strengthen communication and cooperation;
- Preparation for the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III)

The following programme descriptions will serve as an example of UN-Habitat’s approach in supporting

the Moroccan government in facing urban issues.

## URBAN PLANNING AND DESIGN

### Project: Support Program to Al Omrane Holding and to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Policy

The project and its three strategic axes of work are in accordance with the main fields of interest and national strategies relating to:

- (i) New towns;
- (ii) New extension of metropolitan areas;
- (iii) Prevention and integration of informal settlements.

The project is aligned with UN-Habitat’s focus areas and the New Urban Agenda as it responds to the main challenges in terms of developing urban areas that are productive, inclusive and sustainable. The expected accomplishment is to identify jointly with the partners and the stakeholders, new strategic frameworks for 3 metropolitan projects: New towns – City extension – Integration of informal settlements.

The strategic urban framework adopted by the project presents many assets in terms of gender mainstreaming and gender equality, a common and shared vision on urban development, a participatory process, a bottom-up approach integrating civil society, accountability from official elected as well as institutional partners. In addition, the level of intervention remains mainly strategic, as the purpose of the project is the

implementation of a strategic urban framework for large metropolitan projects aiming at the improvement of conditions of living, particularly for vulnerable and marginalized groups.

At regional level, the project aims to articulate UN-Habitat’s work on decentralization with the Advanced Regionalization Project launched by Morocco. This national project will give to the country a more powerful territorial architecture, in response to the challenges of development, competitiveness and complementarity between the various territories. Intended to change the image of a country marked by territorial disparities and inequalities, the project aims at reviewing the territorial configuration and vocations, within the framework of a territorial planning policy, concerned with better coordination between the regions and by the development of integrated spaces. This should make of the regions key partners in the development of Al Omrane Holding’s urban planning and housing operations as well as national and local authorities.

The outputs to be produced by the project in national urban policies and spatial frameworks are in compliance with UN-Habitat’s overall objective on the following issues:

- Compact, as the strategy for the new towns aims at optimizing the pattern of urban growth by implementing a new and sustainable urbanization model and territorial planning policy;
- Socially inclusive by promoting equity through equal access to basic services, particularly for informal housing;
- Connected through adequate transport systems as well as new technologies of

- information and communication;
- Integrated by strong links, with its environment and surrounding areas, at local and national level;
- Resilient to climate change by integrating new technologies and new environmental frameworks in this field.

## A New Urban Agenda

- The Urban Policy adopted by Morocco translates the new interest for the city and its development, in a context of urban growth and high local demand. The following objectives adopted by the project guide this mechanism, which is a component of UN-Habitat's strategy on this matter:
- Reinforce the inter-functional linkages between towns;
- Improve the attractiveness and competitiveness of towns for an inclusive economic growth;
- Ensure social equity, integration and solidarity;
- Improve the quality of the living spaces.

This process is completed by oriented objectives to the development of a better structured urban fabric to:

- Ensure the macro-economic balance of the cities;
- Ensure the complementarity between the urban pillars;
- Articulate the approaches of urban development and planning with the development of urban pillars;



Relocated neighbourhood of Lahraouiyne, 13 km from Casablanca

## HOUSING AND SLUM UPGRADING

### Project: The National Cities Without Slums Programme

UN-Habitat has been supporting the Ministry of Housing and Urban Policy since 2004 through the Cities Without Slums National Programme "Villes sans bidonvilles". The current project - based on technical support to the Moroccan Government - integrates a component for a

strategic framework on two integrated operations of informal housing. The issue of an equitable access to basic services is one of the main axes for the improvement of living conditions for vulnerable and marginalized groups.

The national Cities Without Slums Programme remains the reference at national level for slum upgrading policies, reduction of poverty and improvement of conditions of living for vulnerable and marginalized groups. As an example, the programme was awarded to the UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour in the frame of World Habitat



Day, 2010.

This process, supported by UN-Habitat since the launching of the programme in 2004, has reached one of the highest rates of reduction of slums at global level (around 60%), according to the MDGs – Goal 7, target 11: “By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers” and to the SDGs – Goal 11: “Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”.

All the stakeholders are involved in this process – at local and national level – through city contracts, to reduce poverty and to provide an adequate housing for all, which is a component of the new Moroccan Constitution (2011, Art. 31).

UN-Habitat remains a key partner in this process, particularly through its technical support to the prevention of informal settlements. The Moroccan National Report for Habitat III has dedicated a special chapter to the Housing Strategy for inclusive housing, slum upgrading as well as slum prevention.

## International Conference: “Making Slums History: A Worldwide Challenge for 2020” (Rabat, 2012)

In an effort to learn as much as possible from the substandard housing reduction policies implemented by other governments and cities around the world, Morocco invited the 20

best performers to an international conference organized in partnership with UN-Habitat.

### Conference Objectives

- Formulate specific recommendations to guide the policies on slum-dwellers living conditions improvement and the development of adequate housing alternatives as a means to prevent the formation of new slums (Rabat Declaration);
- Devise the strategy required to revise Target 7.d of MDGs and adjust it to the different national conditions by halving slums at global level;
- Share successful experiences, approaches and performance evaluation methods in the area of slum clearance;
- Generalize the outcome of the Conference to Least Developed Countries (LDCs), particularly in Africa, to help them implement effective slum reduction policies;
- Strengthen partnerships between Morocco and African countries.

As a confirmation of this collective involvement for improved policies on slum upgrading and access to housing for all, the UN-Habitat Governing Council 25 (2013) adopted a resolution which reflects the Rabat Declaration, as a commitment from the participants at the conference to face the challenge of slums as well as adapted prevention strategies at national and local level. UN-Habitat still works on this issues at national level through its technical support to prevent informal housing.

## Key Partners

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Policy, Al Omrane Holding’s umbrella department and UN-Habitat counterpart, is in charge of the Urban Policy since 2012. The focus is on (i) control and management of cities’ growth; (ii) urban strategic planning; (iii) balance between the productive city and the inclusive city; (iv) search for complementarities between urban and regional spaces; (v) development of an urban policy in close correlation with a vision of territorial planning.

The General Directorate of the Local Governments (DGCL), Ministry of Interior, is the entity dedicated to the management of communes. As a focal point of the territorial administration, it finances and supervises the communes, through the powers of the walis and governors, who play a crucial role in the coordination of the various State departments policies. The DGCL also plays a key part in the capacity building of the communes to enable them to assume their responsibility as regards strategic urban planning.

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Policy is in charge of housing and urban policies;
- Al-Omrane Development Holding (HAO) is the strategic tool of the state for slum upgrading, social housing, large scale urban projects and new towns;
- The municipalities and local authorities are in charge of the implementation of national policies and urban programs at local level;

- Local, regional and national partners as well as the private sector and civil society actors are involved in project development and implementation.

Prizes awarded to Morocco within the framework of the partnership with UN-Habitat

- 2010 – UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour for the Cities Without Slums Program “Villes sans bidonvilles”, World Habitat Day, Shanghai, China, October 2010.
- 2001 – Istanbul+5 – Best Practices Prize for the Poverty Reduction Program, Special Assembly on Habitat II+5, New York.
- 1996 – Habitat II – Best Practices Prize for the Project of Agadir City “Improving Housing Conditions”, Istanbul.
- 1995 – UN-Habitat Scroll of Honor for the Project of Taza City awarded to the National Shelter Upgrading Agency (ANHI), World Habitat Day, Curitiba, Brazil.



Minister of Housing and Urban Policy Mohammed Nabil Benabdallah (right) and ED of UN-Habitat Joan Clos (left).

## OUTLOOK

- **Implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the SDG 11;**
- **A Global Conference on Slum Upgrading:**

National housing, slum upgrading and prevention strategies and programmes integrating the vision and principles of the Global Housing Strategy will be formulated and implemented;

## CURRENT PROJECTS

### Annual Budget June 2014 to May 2016

- 1st year: US \$ 177,870 i.e. MAD 1,469,206
- 2nd year: US \$ 156,835 i.e. MAD 1,295,457

A total of US \$ 334,705 corresponding to MAD 2,764,663, from al-Omrane Development Holding.





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