

Management Response: Evaluation of the Regional Office for Arab States (3/2016)

UN-Habitat Management welcomes the Evaluation Report of the Regional Office for Arab States. The evaluation was conducted from October 2015 through February 2016 by consultant Mr. Roberto Ottolenghi. The evaluation process was managed by the Evaluation Unit, and the draft report was shared for review to ensure factual accuracy, integrity, and quality of the evaluation report.

The report provides insightful information about the rapid growth of ROAS and the value it has provided in extending the technical cooperation of UN-Habitat amongst the Arab States in its relatively short time of existence. It notes the effectiveness in establishing a high-level constituency of regional partners as an indispensable cornerstone for fulfilling its mandate; the accomplishment of finalising concurrently the ROAS Regional Strategy and League of Arab States Housing and Urbanisation Strategy technically supported by ROAS, with the alignment of both to the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 and New Urban Agenda; ROAS' positive collaboration with Headquarters; the challenges of transitioning to the UMOJA administrative set-up, and the challenges of operating under civil strife affecting a significant number of countries within the ROAS mandate.

The report highlights that ROAS is significantly underfunded to fulfil the size of its workload. This observation is particularly poignant in view of the need of ROAS to have the adequate capacity to provide oversight and ensure protection of staff in conflict affected countries. It provides insight into areas of importance to Headquarters such as the need for improving reporting and knowledge management systems. The report also recommends completing the negotiation for appropriate levels of delegation of authority for ROAS, in order to be able to deliver on its current workload and to be responsive in the crisis context.

UN-Habitat Management finds the evaluation findings and recommendations to be a fair and evidence-based and it concurs with the conclusions of the performance assessment ratings: Relevance – highly satisfactory; Efficiency – highly satisfactory; Effectiveness – satisfactory; Impact Outlook – satisfactory; Sustainability – satisfactory.

In the following matrix, the Management presents detailed responses to each of the eleven recommendations and proposed actions with timeframe and responsible units for the implementation. Seven recommendations of the evaluation are accepted. Four recommendations are *partially accepted* for reasons provided in the matrix that pertains to the Department of Management at the UN Secretariat having the main responsibility for making decisions related to changing the functionality of UMOJA rather than UN-Habitat's Division of Management and Operations and the principles of matrix structure management and responsibilities and cost recovery implemented in UN-Habitat.