



المملكة المغربية



وزارة إعداد التراب الوطني والتعمير
والإسكان وسياسة المدينة

2nd Arab Ministerial Forum for Housing and Urban Development

21 -23 December 2017

Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco

“Implementing the New Urban Agenda in the Arab Region”

Concept Note

i. Introduction

Pursuant to the *First Arab Ministerial Forum for Housing and Urban Development (AMFHUD1)* hosted by the Arab Republic of Egypt in December 2015, the Arab Council of Ministers of Housing and Construction issued the *Cairo Declaration on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development* to express commitment to the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and the *New Urban Agenda (NUA)* in the Arab region, and adopting their human centred perspective over the next two decades.

The *Second Arab Ministerial Forum for Housing and Urban Development (AMFHUD2)* will be convened in the Kingdom of Morocco under the theme of “**Implementing the New Urban Agenda in the Arab Region**”. AMFHUD2 aims to reflect on the persistent and emerging challenges facing Arab countries to operationalise the *Arab Strategy for Housing and Sustainable Urban Development 2030*, the vehicle for guiding the implementation of the *New Urban Agenda* and the urban components of the *2030 Sustainable Development Agenda*, in particular *Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11* “making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”. AMFHUD2 will also explore opportunities and priority areas to be addressed for localizing relevant regional and global frameworks into their various contexts and share good housing and sustainable urban practices at the national and local levels towards achieving improved quality of life for all.

ii. Background

AMFHUD has been established as a biennial regional consultative mechanism and multi-stakeholder forum on housing and sustainable urban development issues for the Ministerial Council of Housing and Construction, other relevant Ministries of the countries of the region, League of Arab States and its member states, and supported technically by the Regional Office of Arab States (ROAS) of UN-Habitat. AMFHUD follows two main axes:

1. The **Thematic Sessions** shall be organized by a country or group of countries and relevant UN agencies to gather relevant stakeholders around thematic issues. The main output of the Thematic sessions will be a set of recommendations and suggested cooperation initiatives in the specific theme discussed.
2. The **Ministerial Council of Housing and Construction** shall receive all documents discussed during the general and thematic sessions of AMFHUD2, review the recommendations and take action as appropriate. The decisions approved by the Ministerial Council of Housing and Construction concerning AMFHUD shall be forwarded as appropriate to the League of Arab States Economic and Social Council and the Arab League Summit, and other relevant United Nations bodies and mechanisms.

iii. Objectives

In light of political, economic and social changes currently transforming the Arab world, there is a growing need to understand the main trends of urbanization, address the root causes that perpetuate the uncontrolled urban growth and recommend necessary policy and institutional reforms to tackle the widening urban inequalities within and among countries of the region. Concerted effort and cross-cutting coherent initiatives are indispensable in order to present new perspectives to jointly address the most prevalent and persistent constraints to achieving sustainable housing and urban development as well as improve the quality of life for all people in the Arab region. In this regard, AMFHUD2 provides a platform for discussion, exchange and presentation of innovative solutions, lessons learned and cooperation initiatives that would act as drivers of change to accelerate progress on the urban components of the *Sustainable Development Goals* and the *New Urban Agenda* guided by

the *Action Framework for Implementation of the New Urban Agenda* and the *Arab Strategy for Housing and Sustainable Urban Development 2030*. AMFHUD2 will also be key to mobilise the Arab region towards the *World Urban Forum 9* that is scheduled to take place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in February 2018.

As an important step towards achieving sustainable development, AMFHUD2 aspires to also discuss urban structures and mechanisms to address current and future housing and urban challenges in the Arab region, taking into account economic, social and environmental dimensions and the impact of prolonged crisis and conflict in the region. The Forum will also raise awareness on housing and sustainable urban development issues, exchange experiences across Arab States, and present initiatives to identify best practices. With these objectives, AMFHUD2 will also facilitate and strengthen regional cooperation around housing and urban sustainable development issues with reference to international trends.

The expected outputs of the AMFHUD2 session are:

- **Rabat Declaration on Implementing the New Urban Agenda in the Arab Region.**
- Discussion and Finalization of the **Implementation Plan of the Arab Strategy for Housing and Sustainable Urban Development 2030**, including regional monitoring mechanism for the urban component of the *Sustainable Development Goals* and the *New Urban Agenda*.
- **Report of the 2nd Arab Ministerial Forum for Housing and Urban Development** containing documentation of AMFHUD2 outlining key ideas, recommendations and suggested cooperation initiatives and mechanisms.

iv. Organizers

- Ministry of National Planning, Urban Planning, Housing and Urban Policy (Kingdom of Morocco);
- League of Arab States/ Arab Council of Ministers of Housing and Construction;
- UN-Habitat Regional Office for Arab States (Technical Secretariat).

v. Participants

- Ministers and government authorities, officials and representatives of national, regional and local governments as well as representatives of Arab institutions concerned with housing and urban development;

- Professionals and technical officers working in the field of housing and urban development, non-governmental organizations and civil society and community representatives, as well as universities, academia and scientific and research institutions representatives;
- Representatives of private sector organizations in the Arab region;
- International and regional organizations including but not limited to Arab Towns Organisation, Arab Urban Development Institute, United Cities and Local Government Africa, United Cities and Local Government Middle East West Asia, Union for the Mediterranean, Global Alliance on Urban Crisis, European Union, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, UN Environment, UN Women, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Centre for Mediterranean Integration, and United Nations Development Programme.

vi. Sessions and Events

During AMFHUD2, three categories of sessions will be organized: (a) Plenary Sessions – organised by the AMFHUD Preparatory Committee; (b) Thematic Sessions – organised by countries and UN agencies; (c) Side Events – organised by different entities. Sessions are open to all participants.

a. Plenary Sessions

Following the High-Level Opening Session, the Plenary Session shall discuss the state of sustainable urbanization in the Arab region. The third Plenary session will discuss the different regional agendas for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda worldwide to demonstrate similarities and differences in addressing housing and sustainable urban development challenges across the world. The Closing Session will conclude the AMFHUD2 with the presentation of the Rabat Declaration on the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda in the Arab Region and the Implementation Plan for Arab Strategy for Housing and Urban Development 2030. The proposed outcome documents shall be prepared in advance and shared with all countries for comments. Conclusions and output documents shall be presented during the concluding Plenary Session, before the Ministerial Council of Housing and Construction opening and adoption.

b. Thematic Sessions

The Thematic Sessions are organized by one or more League of Arab States member state and a UN agency. The sessions will be guided by the six objectives of the *Arab Strategy for Housing and Sustainable Urban Development 2030*:

1. Ensuring access to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and prosperous living for all.
2. Ensuring equity and social integration.
3. Planning integrated and sustainable human settlements in all states in the Arab region.
4. Applying the principles of good urban management, and capacity building for planning and managing human settlements.
5. Improving urban environmental sustainability and resilience against climate change, and preserving natural resources.
6. Enhancing cities productivity to achieve economic growth and sustainable development at the national and regional levels.

Each 1.5 hour session will discuss one of the above mentioned objectives in light of the New Urban Agenda and the five pillars of the Action Framework for Implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The sessions will include a short introduction on the theme, speeches by panelists, discussion and conclusions. The recommendations from the Thematic Sessions will provide input to the Summary Report that will be presented at the Ministerial Council of Housing and Construction.

The expected outputs of the Thematic Sessions are:

- Compilation of key messages;
- Recommendations to be included in the Rabat Declaration;
- Extraction of lessons learnt and best practices;
- Proposed cooperation initiatives among countries and/ or organizations.

The Thematic Sessions shall be structured around each theme and presented by panelists representing different stakeholders including:

- National and local governments and legislative authorities;
- Civil society organizations, academia and research institutions;
- Regional and international organizations;
- Private sector.

The suggested structure will ensure a general overview of the themes and topics, regional challenges and recommendations and suggested initiatives of different regional stakeholders. The summary of the sessions, recommendations, suggested cooperation initiatives and common actions discussed during the six sessions will be presented during the closing session of the second day.

c. Side Events

Side events will be organized to give an opportunity to discuss relevant themes to the region that were not covered in the thematic sessions. They are open to all formats proposed by concerned organizations, such as governmental, non-governmental, civil society organizations as well as private sector, academia and research institutions. These sessions provide the stage for presenting and discussing housing and urban development initiatives relevant to the Arab region, in addition to being an exchange platform for regional, national and local expertise, good and best practices as well as lessons learnt in order to foster regional cooperation. Side events will be organised by different entities.