



**UN-Habitat is the United Nations programme working towards a better urban future. Its mission is to promote socially and environmentally sustainable villages, towns, and cities and the achievement of adequate shelter for all.** Cities are facing unprecedented demographic, environmental, economic, social, and spatial challenges. There has been a phenomenal shift towards urbanization, with six out of every ten people in the world expected to reside in urban areas by 2030. In the State of Palestine, approximately seventy percent of the West Bank population live in urban areas – mostly in Bethlehem, Hebron, Jerusalem, Nablus, and Ramallah – while in Gaza, eighty percent of the population does. In the absence of effective urban planning, the consequences of this rapid urbanization will be dramatic. In many places around the world the effects can already be felt: lack of proper housing and growth of slums, inadequate and out-dated infrastructure – be it roads, public space, public transport, water, sanitation, or electricity – escalating poverty and unemployment, safety and crime problems, pollution and health issues, as well as poorly managed natural or man-made disasters and other catastrophes due to the effects of climate change.

Mindsets, policies, and approaches towards urbanization need to change in order for the growth of cities and urban areas to be turned into opportunities that will leave nobody behind. UN-Habitat is at the helm of that change, supporting governments in over seventy countries to harness the power of urbanization for the benefit of citizens. Mandated by the UN General Assembly in 1978 to address the issues of urban growth, it is a knowledgeable institution on urban development processes and understands the aspirations of cities and their residents. For close to forty years, UN-Habitat has been working throughout the world, focusing on building a brighter future for villages, towns, and cities of all sizes. Because of these four decades of extensive experience, from the highest levels of policy to a range of specific technical issues, UN-Habitat has gained a unique and universally acknowledged expertise in all things urban. This has placed UN-Habitat in the best position to provide answers and achievable solutions to the current challenges faced by our cities. UN-Habitat is capitalizing on its experience and position to work with partners in order to formulate the urban vision of tomorrow. It works to ensure that cities become inclusive and affordable drivers of economic growth and social development. Since 2003, UN-Habitat has supported Palestinians in their ambitions for a better urban future.