

# **Program and Outline of the First International Conference on Sustainable Urban Development in Syrian Cities**

**Under the patronage of H.E. the Prime Minister, Eng. Mohamed Naji al-Otri**

Conducted by the Ministry of Local Administration (MLA)  
and the Program for Sustainable Urban Development in Syria (GTZ –UDP)  
with contributions from the Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI)

Date: Sun., 27<sup>th</sup> – Tue, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2009

Location: Rida Said Conference Hall, Damascus

### **1. What is the purpose of the Arab International Conference on Syrian Cities?**

Syria is rapidly and often haphazardly urbanizing – a development which raises questions about the appropriate approaches to deal with the phenomenon. The conference will promote a knowledge transfer on the state of cities from a national and international perspective, explore the functioning of city networks in various countries and regions, and foster an exchange on urban development topics between Syrian mayors. Discussions in workshops and panels will throw a light on critical issues and try to figure out how these can be tackled. Finally, the conference aims at producing a Charter on Sustainable Urban Development in Syria as a policy input for the upcoming 11<sup>th</sup> Five -Year-Plan.

### **2. What does the conference focus on?**

The key objective of the conference is to highlight the status and development goals of Syrian cities in an international context with a focus on the MENA region. It aims at discussing the current strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats of Syrian cities. Furthermore, the status of cities in the Arab world will be analyzed with a focus on urban population tendencies and development patterns. The preliminary findings of the Syrian State of Cities Report will be presented. The conference also intends to present examples of Arab and international city networks in order to promote the establishment of a network and information platform of Syrian cities for the exchange of experience on urban issues in Syria.

### **3. What is the general structure of the conference?**

The conference is divided into two main parts. It will begin with introductory lectures and plenary sessions covering the global, regional and specifically Syrian state of cities and cities networks, followed by working groups on some priority areas for Syrian cities. The following key questions will serve as guidelines for the plenary sessions:

- What should urban development goals focus on in the diverse Arabic regions and cities and especially in Syria? What strategies can boost urban areas and regions in terms of quality of life, social inclusiveness, employment, economic activity, and environment?
- How can cities contribute to economic prosperity and further investments in line with development strategies and environmental standards in urban areas? What role does the private sector play in contributing to the urban development process?
- How can planning cope with sustainable urban development requirements considering the limitation of resources in many Arab cities and other obstacles facing the implementation of programs?
- How to adapt the extension and development of urban infrastructure to the implementation of urban planning according to growth patterns and with limited resources?
- To what extent do cities manage to provide basic and extended services to their population? How can service delivery be improved?
- How can Syrian cities benefit from the experience of Arab and international city networks? How to improve the interaction and exchange of local experience between Syrian mayors? How can they benefit from transferring international experience to the national and local level?

- What has the ongoing 10<sup>th</sup> Five-Year-Plan contributed to decentralization, urbanization patterns, and urban planning effectiveness? In what way should the inputs for the upcoming 11<sup>th</sup> Development Plan contribute to the development Syrian cities?

Urban development issues such as:

- urban planning
- urban services
- urban economy
- urban environment
- urban informality
- urban identity
- urban indicators

will be further elaborated in working groups. An additional working group will discuss the draft of the Charter on Syrian Cities.

#### **4. What are the expected outcomes of the conference?**

It is expected that the conference will:

- focus on the “Urban Age” at the global and regional level,
- establish an exchange of experience on national and international city networks, their organizational settings, and their achievements in knowledge transfer, the dissemination of best practices
- foster decentralisation,
- explore the state of Syrian cities in comparison with the state of international and regional cities.

The key objective is to foster the discussion on sustainable urban development in Syria. For this purpose:

- the state of Syrian cities shall be reviewed,
- the opportunities for the formation of an informal Syrian city network and urban information platform (“Mayors forum” – muntada) shall be explored and

a “Memorandum on Sustainable Urban Development in Syria” and the “Charter of Syrian Cities” shall be approved. The memorandum shall serve as a “whitebook” on the status and the policy options of sustainable urban development in Syria. The charter will attempt to outline the key objectives for the development of Syrian cities in a constantly urbanizing region.

#### **5. Who are the participants?**

As invitees, a bias is laid on heads and members of city councils, heads of economic development committees, stakeholders of the private sector, the academic sector, local initiatives, and representatives of governorates and ministries related to urban development. Furthermore, city representatives from Europe, Asia, South Africa, the Arab world, and representatives from international agencies will take part.

**Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2009**

**Coordination meeting**

19.00– 22.00 pm	Representatives of the Syrian government, the MLA, AUDI and GTZ
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**Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2009**

8.15 – 9.15	Registration of participants
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**Opening session**

9.30 – 10.30	Welcoming speeches	Director of the Program for Sustainable Urban Development in Syria – GTZ	Eng. Hilmar von Lojewski
		Country director of the GTZ-office in Syria and Lebanon	Dr. Magdy El Menshawy
		General director of AUDI	Dr. Ahmad Al Salloum
		Prime Minister	H.E. Eng. Mohamed Naji Al Otri

10.15 – 10.45	Coffee break
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**1<sup>st</sup> session –Presentations on Status of Cities and city networks – The global perspective**

10.45 – 12.45	Introduction into the presentations: “The Urban Age – Global perspectives on the Status of Cities / Findings and recommendations from 5 continents	Urban Age, London School of Economics	Mr. Philipp Rode
	“The global perspective I – Europe and Germany” – Status of cities and city networks in the EU and Germany	German Association of Cities – DST	Mr. Folkert Kiepe
	“The global perspective II –Africa and South Africa” - Status of cities and city networks in Africa and South Africa	South African Cities Network (SACN)	Mr. Sithole Mbanga
	“The global perspective III – Asia and Thailand” - Status of Cities in South-	Thailand Environment	Dr. Paul Chamniern Vorrattchaiphan

	Asia and Thailand / Cities Development Initiative for Asia (CDIA)	Institute (TEI)	
	“The global perspective IV Asia and Indonesia” - Status of Cities and city networks in Southeast-Asia and Indonesia	Ronakota Research Collaboration	Dr. Wicaksono Sarosa
12.45- 13.15	Questions of the audience Conclusions on the global perspective		Mr. Philipp Rode - Urban Age, Ebba Augustin

13.15 – 14.30	Lunch break		
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<b>2<sup>nd</sup> session - From the Global and Arab perspective to the Syrian perspective</b>			
14.30 – 16.00	“The Arab perspective – MENA Region” - Status of Cities and city networks in Maghreb, Mashreq and the Arabian Peninsula	AUDI	Dr. Ahmad Al Salloum Dr. Ali Madibo
	“The Syrian perspective” – Status of Cities and potentials for a city network in Syria	MLA – Deputy Minister	Eng. Mohammed Sadeq Abu Watfeh
	Conclusion and discussion – What are the key findings of the status of cities and the access points towards a Syrian city network?	GTZ-UDP Consultant	Prof. Detlef Kammeier

16.00-16.30	Coffee break		
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<b>3<sup>rd</sup> session – Working groups</b>			
16. 30 – 16.45	Introduction to the seven working groups	GTZ-UDP Consultants	Dr. Roudaina Al Khani Ebba Augustin
16.50– 19.00	Seven working groups are simultaneously taking place and assisted by the consultants, MLA counterparts and GTZ-UDP	Prof. Detlef Kammeier Ebba Augustin Dr. Roudaina Al Khani Eng. Mahmoud Ramadan	
<b>Working groups</b>		<b>Chairman / Rapporteur / Backstopper</b>	
Working group WG 1: Urban Planning		Mayor of Aleppo, Dr. Maan Chibli/ Dr. Lamis Herbly/ Dr. Paul Chamniern Vorratnchaiphan	
Working group WG 2: Urban Services		Deputy Minister of the MLA, Eng. Mohammed Sadeq Abu Watfeh/ Dr. Aber Muhammad / Mr. Clemens Mael	

Working group WG 3: Urban Economy	Director of the SPC, Dr. Tayssir al-Radawi/ Eng. Zilal Rahime / Mr. Christoph David Weinmann, Dr. Darim al-Bassam
Working group WG 4: Urban Environment	Deputy Minister of Environment, Eng. Imad Hassoun/ Eng. Feras Asfour / Prof. Dr. Adrian Atkinson
Working group WG 5: Urban Informality	H.E. the Minister of Housing and Construction, Dr. Omar Ghalawanji/Eng. Razan Abdulwahab/ Prof. Dr. Patrick Wakely
Working group WG 6: Urban Identity	Governor of Damascus, Dr. Bishr al-Sabban/ Dr. Sachar Olabi / Dr. Khaled al-Tadmori, Eng. Regina Kallmayer
Working group WG 7: Urban Indicators	Director of the General Bureau of Statistics, Dr. Shafiq Arbash/ Mr. Bashar Shakra / Dr. Ahmad Taha, Prof. Burkhard von Rabenau
Working group WG 8: The Charter on Syrian Cities	H.E. Min MLA Dr. Tamer al-Hajjeh / George Hartman/ Eng. Hilmar von Lojewski

<b>20.30</b>	<b>Conference Dinner</b>
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Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2009

**4<sup>th</sup> session - Conclusions of the working groups**

9.30 – 11.30	Reports by the rapporteurs and backstoppers of the working groups 1-8 Questions of the audience	WG 1: L.Herbly / P.Chamniern Vorratnchaiphan WG 2: A.Mohamed / C. Mauel WG 3: Z.Rahime / C.D. Weinmann/ D. al-Bassam WG 4: F.Asfour / A. Atkinson WG 5: R.Abdulwahab / P. Wakely WG 6: S.Olabi / K.Tadmori, R. Kallmayer WG 7: B.Shakra / A.Taha, B.v.Rabenau WG 8: S. Abu Watfeh / George Hartman
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11.30-12.00	Coffee break
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**5<sup>th</sup> session – Discussion of the draft Arab Charter of Syrian Cities**

12.00 – 13.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments by the Cities and the Ministry for Local Administration What do the results of the working groups mean for a Policy on Sustainable Urban Development in Syria?</li> <li>Which priority activities have to be taken by the Ministry for Local Administration and the Cities?</li> </ul>	MLA – Deputy Minister	Eng. Sadeq Abu Watfeh
		Mayor of Aleppo	Dr. Maan Chibli
13.30 – 14.00	Plenary discussion Wrap up		

14.00 – 15.00	Lunch break
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**6<sup>th</sup> session – Draft Memorandum on Sustainable Urban Development in Syria / Final Arab Charter of Syrian Cities**

15.00 – 15.30	Presentation The draft Memorandum on Sustainable Urban Development in Syria The final Arab Charter of Syrian Cities	MLA GTZ-UDP AUDI	Eng. Sadeq Abu Watfeh George Hartman Dr. Ahmad Salloum
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15.30 – 16.00	Declaration and signing of the Arab Charter of Syrian Cities	Minister of the MLA, H.E. Dr. Eng. Tamer al-Hajjeh; Mayor of Aleppo, Dr. Maan Chibli; Mayor of Homs, Eng. Nadia Kseibeh; Mayor of Hama, Eng. Mukhtar Horani; Mayor of Sweida, Mr. Safwan Abu Saada; Mayor of Lattaqia, Eng. Sadiq Khaled Matrahji; Mayor of Deraa, Mr. Ayman Faycal Al-Muhamid; Mayor of Qamishli, Mr. Suheil Aziz Rahawi; Mayor of Raqqa, Eng. Abid Al-Hassan; Mayor of Deir ez-Zor, Mr. Marwan Najem Al-Hasbat; Mayor of al-Hassakeh, Eng. Qais Al-Mis'el; Mayor of Idleb, Mr. Omar Qasem Agha; Mayor of Tartous, Eng. Othman Mustafa Othman; Governor of Rural Damascus, Mr. Zahed Hajj Moussa; Governor of Damascus, Dr. Bsher al-Sabban; Governor of Quneitra, Dr. Riad Hijab
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