

First Iraqi National Housing Conference Baghdad, 14-15 January 2009

Final Recommendations



In support of the efforts aimed at sustaining the building and construction process, and given that the Housing Sector represents a fundamental cornerstone for reconstruction;

Given that the new Iraqi Constitution has authorized the State to ensure that individuals and families, especially children and women, enjoy social and health security and are provided with the basic requirements for a free and decent living, sufficient income and adequate housing;

In fulfillment of the National Development Strategy, according to which the provision of proper housing for Iraqis should be a top priority of the government;

Based on the mandate of the Iraqi Ministry of Construction and Housing (MoCH), being responsible for this vital aspect of the citizens' life; and

To realize the future vision of the MoCH, the 1st National Conference for the Housing Sector was held at Al-Rashid Hotel in Baghdad on 14-15 January 2009. The conference was attended by all concerned sector players, ministries, members of parliament, international community, private sector and senior government officials. The participants discussed the obstacles to adequate housing delivery at various levels. They also examined appropriate, effective, and expeditious solutions needed to bridge the housing gap, and directions for a future National Housing Policy.

Following elaborate deliberations, the participants agreed to address all existing impediments, facilitate housing finance and ensure that the State should continue with its efforts to provide housing to marginalized, vulnerable and underprivileged groups, including the Internally Displaced and Returnees. They also agreed to view the housing sector as a productive sector and not only one contributing to social welfare and remaining restricted to the demands of the upper and upper middle classes.

Building on the above, the Conference has come up with the following recommendations:

- **To coordinate efforts to address the overlapping jurisdictions in management and decision-making:**
 1. The need for a High Powered Committee linked to one or more competent authorities. This committee shall lead the housing policy making process, in addition to being authorized to coordinate efforts among ministries and governorates under the direct supervision of the Prime Minister;
 2. A specialized technical secretariat shall be affiliated to the aforementioned High Powered Committee and shall be responsible for coordinating and taking appropriate measures regarding the development of national policies, coordination with the competent ministries, cooperation with the concerned authorities as well as seeking the international expertise of UN-HABITAT especially with regard to fostering and sustaining good urban management, capacity building, institutional reforms, promoting public-private partnerships, community participation and the development of legal and regulatory frameworks;
 3. The newly-created Governorate Planning Units shall be supported with housing facilitation units that may be created at the MoCH departments in the respective governorates. This may be done within a comprehensive national programme for housing facilitation, in coordination with the concerned ministries and governorates, based on a well-prepared action

plan that would be a major contributor to the development of a decentralized housing delivery programme.

The proposed management structures shall assume the following responsibilities:

- **In the field of financing and mobilizing housing sector investments :**
 - Develop action and coordination mechanisms between the Housing Fund and the Investment Commission, and introduce innovative approach for financing and quick recovery of investors' money, which may be used to promote private investment, to provide the needed infrastructure for the land earmarked for housing, construction of housing estates, and provision of support for the various relevant construction industries.
 - Take immediate action to enact the Law concerning the new Housing Fund and increase its capital.
 - Allocate the money of the Housing Fund as grants, to enable the Fund, under the supervision of the High Powered Committee, to use the loan interests in financing various housing programmes as well as financing the UN-HABITAT led technical assistance and capacity building efforts.
- **In the field of developing and increasing the housing stock and creating new jobs**
 - Prepare a national programme for slum rehabilitation, with the assistance of UN-HABITAT expertise.
- **In the legislative field**
 - Draft a comprehensive housing legislation and accelerate the enactment of the relevant laws, particularly the new Housing Fund Law.

- Review the existing housing related legislations by competent authorities under the supervision of the High Powered Committee; enact new legislations to strengthen the institutional framework for the implementation of the housing action plan. These actions should be completed within an expeditious timeframe to be determined by the concerned authority.

- **In the field of benefiting from UN-HABITAT Technical Assistance**
 - Under the supervision of the Technical Committee, the High Powered Committee shall introduce innovative mechanisms to strengthen cooperation with UN-HABITAT. These efforts shall also aim to expand and evaluate the capacity building programmes, in line with the National Housing Policy.
 - With support from the Technical Committee, the High Powered Committee shall review the national programme for housing facilitation proposed at the Conference, in order to be endorsed and shall facilitate its large-scale implementation throughout the country with the UN-HABITAT assistance.
- **In the field of developing a long-term National Housing Policy:**
 - Under the supervision of the Technical Committee, the High Powered Committee shall take necessary action for setting out the necessary mechanisms and measures, assisted by specialized working groups benefiting from the UN-HABITAT and international expertise in all relevant fields.

To level the ground for the above measures:

It was recommended that a High Powered Committee proposed at the Conference be created immediately to coordinate and propose the necessary mechanisms to implement the above recommendations.