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SUMMARY OF CASES for Creative Industries Fund NL

UN-Habitat's Urban Planning and Design Lab has prepared a selection of cases to work on with a team of experts procured by the Creative Industries Fund NL. The cases have been discussed with UN-Habitat's regional (Latin America, Africa, Asia and Asian Pacific) offices and country offices and in many cases already with the local stakeholders (municipalities and planning organizations). The criteria for selection are based on urgency, momentum, visibility, readiness to receive a team, attractiveness and specificity of the task.

CASE 1: MYANMAR / ASIA

CASE 2: PALESTINE / MIDDLE EAST

CASE 3: MEXICO / LATIN AMERICA

CASE 4: PHILIPINES / ASIA

CASE 5: ACCRA / AFRICA

CASE 1: MYANMAR / ASIA / NEW ECONOMY & NEW PARADIGM

Myanmar stands at a defining point in its recent history. Since 2011, the country has seen a general trend towards social and economic liberalization and a more market-oriented economy, which will inevitably lead to increasing urbanization. Ambitiously, the country is anticipating this growth by preparing plans for over 200 cities. The new planning law that any moment can come into effect, encourages cities to make plans, and offers a unique opportunity to define the future of many of Myanmar's Cities.

Yet with very few qualified planners, Myanmar has limited manpower and technical capacity. Current urban plans are based on outdated planning principles with unfit street sections and street patterns that lead to congestion. There is a great demand for a new planning vision. Establishing a lab of Dutch planners enables local planners to familiarize with the state of the art of planning, and gives Dutch planners the opportunity to significantly contribute to a better urban future of Myanmar.

Assignment: to create an exemplary city extension in the Capital of Yangon that plans six new areas to expand. This extension needs to be based on strong economic and legal foundations so that it is implementable and can serve as a showcase for sustainable urban planning. Special attention should be given on how to accommodate and finance affordable housing and what international funding is available to execute the plan. Now that Myanmar is decentralising its planning expertise the process includes a strong 'learning by doing' component for the local counterpart.

Momentum: Recent economic and cultural opening-up of the country, and the implementation of new planning law.

Partners: UN-Habitat Country Office Myanmar, Ministry of Construction Union of Myanmar, YCDC, Yangon City Development Corporation, DHSHD Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development

CASE 2: PALESTINE / ARAB STATES / CONFLICT & HIGH GROWTH

Rapid urbanization, high population growth rates, scarcity of land and territorial fragmentation resulting from the Israeli occupation in Palestine are among the main challenges facing the Palestinian urban areas today. These are creating a growing pressure on land, infrastructure and resources and as a result, random and uncontrolled developments have expanded in the cities and around the fringes of towns, encroaching on surrounding agricultural land.

The fragile economy is another challenge; the Palestinian economy is largely dependent on Israel and very vulnerable to Israeli policies and decisions. The concentration of the economic activities in the main urban centers, and the lack of investments in rural areas have led to huge flux of internal migration creating an additional pressure on the existing infrastructure and urban services. Consequently, all these challenges had led to rapid physical development, increasing pressure on the already deteriorated infrastructure, encroachment of agricultural land, deterioration of the urban environment, and accordingly rapid and unbalanced urbanization.

The assignment can change due to conflict and political challenges.

The work can take two directions. One will be more on the post conflict and natural growth challenge the other direction is to get involved in the reconstruction planning of a small town. Both are urgent challenges supported by the local UN-Habitat office and local municipalities. Depending on the timing of the mission and the political circumstances a decision will be made.

Two directions the work can take:

Gaza City is a Palestinian city in the Gaza Strip, with a population of 515,556 (2012). Gaza City has one of the highest overall growth rates in the world, largely due to the influx of refugees: in 1997, 51% of Gaza's city planning consisted of refugees. It also has a high population density of about 10.000/km². The latest city wide vision, which dates from 1997, needs to be revised to address these problems.

Khuza'a a Palestinian town in the Khan Yunis governorate in the Southern Gaza Strip has been heavily damaged in the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict. Over one third of the town only 500 meters from the border with Israel has been destroyed. There is a strong demand and urgency to develop a reconstruction plan for this small town in a heavy conflict zone.

Assignment: a city-wide strategy for Gaza City or a local reconstruction plan of a Khuza'a in collaboration with local planners.

Momentum: 5th of August, UN-Habitat and its partners launched a new city region planning initiative for three Governorates that represent a critical component in the realization of an overall spatial framework for the State of Palestine.

Partners: UN-Habitat Country Office Palestine, Gaza City Municipalities.

CASE 3: MEXICO / LATIN AMERICA / URBAN RENEWAL

In Mexico, urban renewal has become a major development strategy. In the case of about seven million houses built in remote areas, increasing commuting costs have forced many residents to move leaving, abandoning their homes. An adequate framework for urban renewal could tackle sprawl, reduce congestion, and bring residents closer to their work. The national housing programme Sustainable Urban Development (DUIS) introduced in the late 2000s can in this context become a powerful tool for sustainable housing. Combined with urban renewal strategies, DUIS can contribute to the supply of low-income housing in a way that is less environmentally damaging and more socially inclusive. UN-Habitat is organizing an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) to discuss the urban renewal of seven project areas in Mexico Federal District.

The establishment of a planning lab will enable Dutch planners to engage in one of the salient urban challenges in Mexico. The planners can tap into international expertise by using the recommendations and instruments coming out of the EGM and apply them for an in depth strategy for one of the seven project areas. To local counterparts, this is an opportunity to tackle the complex legal and financial context behind urban renewal with a project-approach.

Assignment: urban renewal strategy.

Momentum: DUIS, and Expert Group Meeting on urban renewal.

Partners: UN-Habitat Country Office Mexico, local stakeholder of the project area.

CASE 4: PHILIPPINES / ASIA / RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Tacloban City was one of the cities severely hit in 2013 by typhoon Yolanda. This typhoon was one the strongest tropical typhoons ever recorded and has killed at least 6.300 people in the Philippines alone. The local government of Tacloban City has, with support from UN-Habitat and United Nations Development Programme, organized several planning charettes to brainstorm and discuss strategies for the spatial development of Tacloban in order to address emergency, recovery, and long term rehabilitation needs. The city is visited by on average 20 typhoons a year and 42of the city's 138 villages are classified as danger zones.

Yet besides reconstruction issues, rapid urbanization too poses a great challenge to the country to achieve sustainable urban development. The Philippines is projected to go from an urbanization rate of 50% to 84% by 2050. This growth is expected to happen not only in the capital city Manila but mainly in small and intermediate cities, such as Tacloban City. This growth could be obviated by urban planning only if that takes the post-disaster and flooding context very carefully into account.

Assignment: growth, reconstruction and disaster resilience strategy for Tacloban.

Momentum: Post-disaster engagement UN-Habitat and ASUD; Achieving Sustainable Urban Development.

Partners: UN-Habitat Country Office Philippines, Municipality of Tacloban.

CASE 5: ACCRA / AFRICA / RAPID GROWTH

The growth of Accra is concerning: within 30 years, Accra grew from a city with a radius of 10 km into a continuous, urban agglomeration that stretches over 60 km along the coastline. With a staggering growth rate of 4.6%, the population is expected to grow from 2.5 million in 2011 to 4.2 million in 2020. In Accra, the speed of speculation has consistently outpaced the speed of planning and good spatial planning and design assistance directly affects the municipalities' capacity to deliver basic services.

On UN-Habitat's initiative, a National Priority Project has been established that will entail a planned extension of Accra into adjacent Ningo-Prampram district. The private sector too has shown much interest in the plan, and support its moving forward towards implementation with a steering committee that has the mandate to approve. Dutch planners would build on this momentum and design this city extension of Ningo Prampram that could in the future accommodate a first phase of 300.000 inhabitants. This first phase is part of a Vision that should be improved by the team and that should take into account the possible relocation of the airport and a growth scenario of one million inhabitants.

Assignment: planned city extension of Accra in Ningo-Prampram and Vision for the big picture.

Momentum: city extension Accra in Ningo Prampram promoted to National Priority Project.

Partners: UN-Habitat Country Office Ghana, District of Ningo Prampram, Private sector parties like energy and infrastructure providers, local chiefs and landowners of tribal or customary lands.