

LEAVING NO ONE AND NO PLACE BEHIND

CITY FOR ALL: Investing in Peace and Sustainable Urban Development in Afghanistan

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City for All (CFA) Programme

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City for All



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FOREWORDS

MAIMUNAH MOHD SHARIF

Under-Secretary-General and UN-Habitat Executive Director



In the year that marks the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, I am very pleased to launch the publication of this exceptional book about the real and impactful localization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with particular focus on Sustainable Development Goal 11 dedicated to cities and human settlements. The City for All programme is a result of our strategic partnership with the government and people of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in building inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities for all, leaving no one behind.

This book consolidates our joint vision about the power of urbanization as a tool to achieve socio-economic development, fight urban poverty, empower women, facilitate peace, and guarantee decent living standards for the entire urban Afghan population.

It is an extraordinary publication that shows us the transformative force of urbanization through the adoption and implementation of ambitious policy frameworks, sound urban regulations, strategic urban planning, and municipal finance, always putting people at the centre of the reforms.

Afghanistan's impressive reforms in land, which include the regulation on the registration of informal settlements, the informal settlements upgrading policy, and the increased municipal revenue capacity through the safayi fee, are major achievements. This unique publication is a combination of a detailed and well-informed examination of the policy frameworks, regulations, and their localization, and real human stories and wonderful photographs from the field. It portrays a sense of hope and positivity within the challenging and complex political situation marked by the longstanding conflict, and places urbanization as a strategic force for peace and stability.

I would like to congratulate H.E. President Ashraf Ghani for his vision placing urbanization at the heart of the country's development policies. The Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework and the Urban National Priority Programme are Afghanistan's road map to achieve development, peace, and self-reliance.

I would also like to thank the Ministry of Urban Development and Land, the Deputy Ministry of Municipalities, and the Mayors of the cities in Afghanistan for their strategic partnership with UN-Habitat in the implementation of the City for All programme. We have been working together for more than two decades, and City for All exemplifies our common journey towards a better urban future and peace.

UN-Habitat's country programme in Afghanistan is globally significant. Headquartered in Kabul, and present in 12 Afghan cities, it is UN-Habitat's biggest global mission in a conflict zone. With more than 1,500 staff, our work covers the development and humanitarian nexus, with an important interconnection with peace and stability. To our staff in Kabul and all Afghan cities, both national and international, I wish to express my gratitude and recognition of this valuable service in a difficult duty station.

This publication is an authoritative analysis that captures the ongoing commitment and recognition of their work with the institutions and people of Afghanistan and, above all, a window into Afghanistan's best practices in implementing the New Urban Agenda, the UN road map for achieving development, peace, and prosperity.

Thank you.

H.E. JAWAD PEIKAR

Minister of Urban Development and Land



Under the leadership of President Ashraf Ghani, our country has embarked on a path to reverse the effect of four decades of destruction and despair that has defined our cities. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has placed the urban agenda at the heart of our development and strategic policies, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Urbanization is not only a pressing reality, but a real opportunity to drive socio-economic development, create jobs, ensure access to land and decent housing for all, and help bring durable peace and stability in Afghanistan. The future of Afghanistan relies largely on our responsibility to provide urban dwellers with safe, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable cities where every citizen has the right to live in dignity.

The rapid urban growth is transforming the way of life of millions. Today, one-fourth of our population is residing in our cities, and by 2060 one-half of Afghans will be. We need to make sure that the future urban dwellers will have the chance to live in prosperity and peace, with access to basic services. So far, the contribution of urbanization to the national economy accounts for more than 50 percent of our gross domestic product, fostering innovation and human development, and providing peaceful sanctuaries. However, our cities still face enormous challenges. Eighty percent of the urban population has no formal land ownership and is subject to the constant threat of eviction. Municipalities have not been able to collect enough revenue to provide basic services. Illegal land grabbing has accompanied the expansion of informal settlements.

To respond to these urban challenges, our government has made heavy investments in key strategic areas in which the City for All programme, in close collaboration with UN-Habitat, has played a key role.

Our country has opened the way to unprecedented reform in land management, with the aim of guaranteeing security of tenure to all urban dwellers, especially those living in informal areas. The formal registration of informal properties through the issuance of occupancy certificates is encouraging economic investment, increasing property value, and promoting economies of agglomeration. The development and implementation of new regulations has empowered women by providing them with access to formal property rights and has provided our vulnerable populations with access to land and housing. So far, more than 800,000 urban properties have been registered. City for All has also assisted our municipalities to strengthen their revenue capacity by putting in place a system that has enabled the collection of nearly 2 billion afghanis (USD 25.6 million) in additional revenue. The programme has also introduced participatory strategic action planning, which ensures the active participation of our communities in decision-making processes for local urban development and thus helps us to build trust with them. And finally, City for All has helped us to develop a street addressing system for Kabul and 11 other municipalities.

I wish to thank UN-Habitat, a strategic partner of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, for the technical support and expertise in the implementation of this strategic programme and for the publication of this enriching book. I also want to thank our donors, USAID and the European Union, for their generosity with the people of Afghanistan.

I am immensely delighted to witness the publication of this extraordinary book which provides an insightful analysis of our reforms with real examples of their impact in the daily lives of our people.

Enjoy it!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is the result of the collaboration and commitment of both UN-Habitat staff in the City for All (CFA) programme and Afghan government officials from the Ministry of Urban Development and Land (MUDL), the Afghanistan Land Authority (ARAZI), the Deputy Ministry of Municipalities (DMM), Kabul Municipality, and the municipalities of Herat, Kandahar, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad, Bamyan, Farah, Nili, Spin Boldak, Injil, Mirbachakot, and Balkh.

Special gratitude to His Excellency Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and to Scott Guggenheim, former senior advisor to the President, for supporting the concept of the CFA programme and for mobilizing resources for its implementation.

The cooperation and dedication of Minister Jawad Peikar (MUDL), Deputy Minister Abdul Baqi Popal (DMM), Mayor Ahmad Zaki Sarferaz (Kabul Municipality), and the mayors of Herat, Kandahar, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad, Bamyan, Farah, Nili, Spin Boldak, Injil, Mirbachakot, and Balkh went a long way to ensure the successful implementation of the CFA programme. A special mention goes to the CFA programme management team led by Antony Lamba (Chief Technical Advisor), Habib Rahimi (National Programme Manager), and Sayed Sadullah Wahab (National Programme Coordinator) for their professionalism and determination to steer the programme in an often-difficult environment.

The contributions of UN-Habitat operations staff, provincial managers and support staff in the provinces, CFA team leaders, urban planners, municipal finance officers, engineers, database officers, GIS officers, surveyors, social organizers, and revenue mobilizers in the implementation of the programme made the preparation of this book possible.

Further appreciation is due to Srinivasa Popuri, Matthew French, and Jan Turkstra for designing the CFA programme, as well as the leadership and direction of Tim McNair and Fernando Da Cruz as UN-Habitat Afghanistan Country Programme Managers during the implementation of the programme.

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INTRODUCTION

The United Nations and its Secretary-General have urgently called for a decade of action to accelerate sustainable solutions for the world's biggest problems, which range from poverty, gender inequality, and war to climate change and economic inequality, thereby putting people and our planet at the centre of the global debate.

This book is an immediate response to the Secretary-General's call to advance the all-embracing vision brought by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda, the UN road map to achieving urban development, through a set of concrete actions and their related quick impacts to improve people's lives in a war-torn country: Afghanistan.

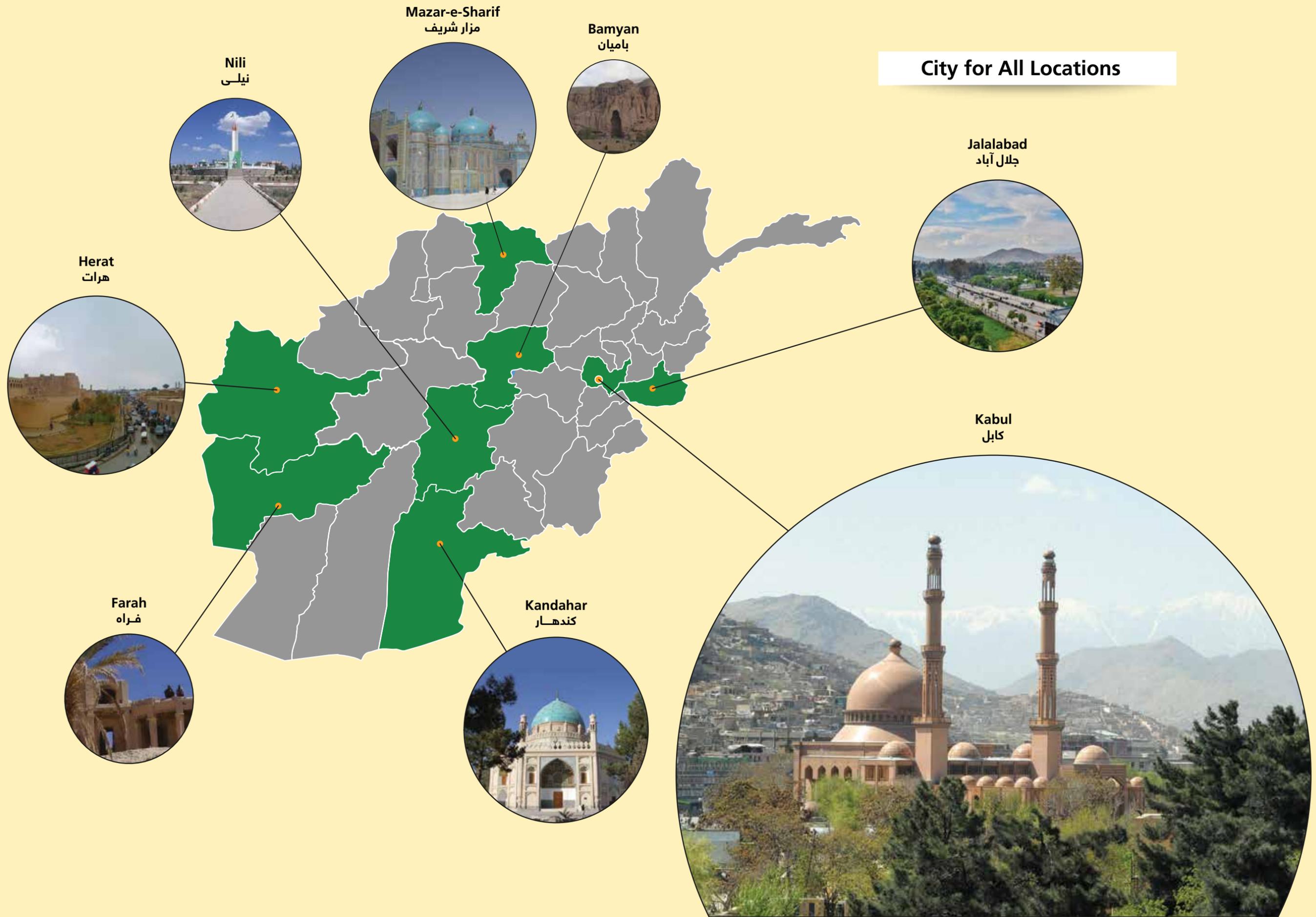
The rapid urbanizing trends in Afghanistan are shaping people's lives in an unprecedented manner. Urbanization has been driven by the natural trend of millions of Afghan citizens relocating to cities to seek better socio-economic opportunities, but also by people cruelly displaced by war in rural areas as well as returning refugees from neighbouring countries. Another factor has been the rapid proliferation of communication technology and the subsequent job creation emerging from the knowledge-based economy in cities. Despite enormous challenges, planned urbanization has proved to be one of the most powerful engines to promote women's empowerment, a decent life, socio-economic development, and peace in Afghanistan.

Through a series of real stories and impactful photographs from Afghanistan's historical cities, this book depicts a sense of hope and positivity arising from the structural urban reforms embraced in the New Urban Agenda and implemented in 12 Afghan cities. The guiding thread of this book follows the road map of actions agreed by all United Nations member states in Habitat III and its outcome document, the New Urban Agenda. The book localizes the three fundamentals of urbanization – urban legislation, urban planning and municipal finance – encapsulating the impressive impact of these reforms on people's lives, especially women and vulnerable populations.

There are significant challenges, but the results speak for themselves. As of the end of March 2020, 831,000 properties have been surveyed, enhancing land tenure security for residents of informal areas and empowering women and vulnerable populations through occupancy certificates. In addition, participatory strategic planning with communities has resulted in hundreds of infrastructure projects being implemented. And, impressively, municipal finance reform has collected almost 2 billion afghanis in additional municipal revenue towards the cost of local infrastructure and service provision and the implementation of a street addressing system.

Leaving No One and No Place Behind: City for All – Investing in Peace and Sustainable Urban Development in Afghanistan unveils the hidden treasures of the strategic correlation between urbanization, development, and peace through the City for All programme. It is an intimate look at a national programme that contributes to improving people's lives, eradicating social inequalities, and promoting peace through the provision of quality basic services to Afghan men and women.

City for All Locations



CHAPTER 1

URBAN LAND MANAGEMENT

1. URBAN LAND MANAGEMENT

Afghanistan is undertaking comprehensive reform in urban land management. The key components of the reform have targeted a wide range of strategic but complex interventions, from legislative reforms such as the occupancy certificate regulation to policy development such as the housing policy to street addressing and the identification of land for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returning refugees. The provision of land tenure security for all is viewed as a strategic precondition for recovery, peace, and development in Afghanistan. Land conflicts have been at the heart of the country's urban challenges. Access to land and urban services for all residents, especially women and children, contributes to the well-being, socio-economic development, and stability of urban residents.

In Afghanistan, more than 80 percent of the urban population has no formal land document. The rapid urbanization process has largely been informal and unplanned. In parallel to the natural rural–urban migration, which represents a search for better economic opportunities and livelihoods, Afghanistan's urbanization has been fuelled by internally displaced persons and returning refugees from neighbouring Iran and Pakistan. The longstanding conflict in Afghanistan has shaped its urbanization process. Land grabbing has been the rule and not the exception. In the absence of an ability to plan the disproportionate urban expansion, provide public spaces, and consider densities, the urbanization process has been far from sustainable in terms of socio-economic prosperity and equity. Most urban residents are deprived of adequate housing and basic infrastructure and services. As a result, residents of urban informal settlements are generally poor, do not have incentives for capital investments and economic activities, and are subject to the constant threat of eviction.

National and local government authorities have not had the capacity to control the rapid urbanization or to harness the immense benefits of well-planned and well-designed urbanization. The situation is severely aggravated by a lack of the regulatory frameworks required for any urban reform. Overall, the situation has led to high levels of urban poverty, chaos, and environmental degradation.

It was under these circumstances that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan launched ambitious urban land reforms that placed urbanization at the heart of its development strategy and policies. The new land reforms aimed at identifying state land for residents living in informal areas; formalizing the informal settlements through surveying and registering all properties, formal and informal; issuing occupancy certificates for residents of informal areas, thereby granting them land tenure security; and adopting regulatory and policy frameworks. These reforms are included in the Urban National Priority Programme, the national vision of Afghanistan for achieving prosperity and growth in urban areas.



View of Kabul hills.

JAWAD PEIKAR

Minister of Urban Development and Land

“ *The adoption of the Presidential Decree on the Registration of Properties in Informal Urban Areas in 2018 has opened a new chapter of land reform in Afghanistan by guaranteeing security of tenure to all urban dwellers, including women.* **”**



1.1. Regulations and Policy Frameworks on Urban Land Management

Urbanization without rules and regulations tends to be spontaneous and ad hoc. Afghanistan's urban situation is an iconic example of the lack of regulations and the socio-economic and environmental consequences. Urbanization, one of the most ancient complex processes of human life, should be based on rule of law. The adoption and implementation of regulatory frameworks and policies will contribute to the numerous benefits of well-planned and well-managed urbanization by eradicating inequalities, distributing wealth in an orderly manner, and guaranteeing a decent standard of living for all.

Regulation on the Registration of Properties in Informal Urban Areas

The adoption in February 2018 and implementation of the new regulation on the registration of properties in urban informal areas, also known as the occupancy certificate regulation, addresses the issue of informality through the regularization and formalization of informal properties. The regulation provides for occupancy certificates to be issued jointly to heads of households and their spouses for all urban properties on state-owned land.

Regulation on the Identification and Allocation of State Land to Returnees and IDPs

The adoption of the Presidential Decree on the Identification and Allocation of State Land to Returnees and IDPs (Presidential Decree 305) in August 2018 was a step forward towards durable solutions and the reintegration of returnees and IDPs in Afghanistan. The decree will regulate access to land, tenure security, and housing for refugees and IDPs on state land, addressing one of the major humanitarian crises of the country. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has committed to 'ensuring a better future for our refugees, returning migrants, and internally displaced people' in its National Peace and Development Framework (2017–2021). One of the key priorities of the government is improving access to land and adequate housing to support the durable solutions and reintegration process reflected in Goal 4 of its Policy Framework for Returnees and IDPs (2017).

The Urban National Priority Programme (UNPP): A National Vision for Urbanization

The Urban National Priority Programme sees urbanization as an opportunity for growth, job creation, and socio-economic development following the UN's global vision enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda, the outcome document of Habitat III. The novelty of the new urban paradigm shift revealed the correlation between urbanization and development. In Afghanistan, despite the numerous urban challenges and with only a quarter of its population living in (mainly informal) urban areas, the contribution of cities to the national economy accounts for more than half of the national gross domestic product. Urbanization has proven to be not only a way of life for one-quarter of the population, but a driving engine of the country's growth. The potential of well-planned and well-designed urbanization has become a powerful opportunity for growth and peace for Afghanistan's people and cities. The Urban National Priority Programme captures this vision with an action-oriented plan formalizing the informal settlements and planning Afghanistan's future urbanization as a transformative tool for job creation, innovation, and prosperity.

1.2. Key Facts on Urban Land Management

1 Million Target number of properties to be surveyed and registered by 2021

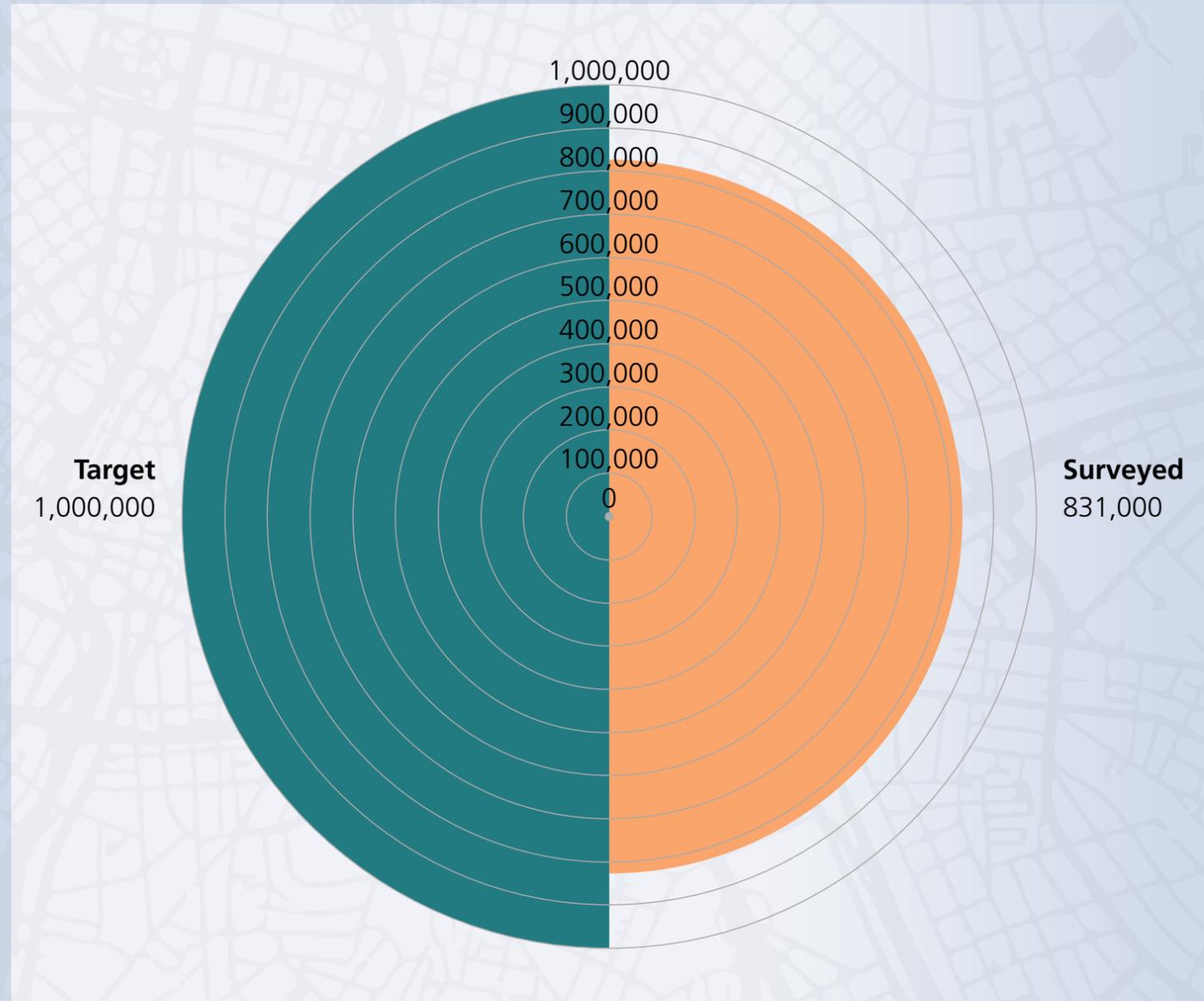
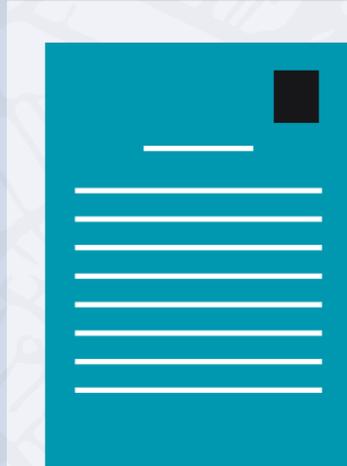
831,000

Properties surveyed and registered by March 2020



21,000

Occupancy certificates distributed by March 2020



More Key Facts on Urban Land Management

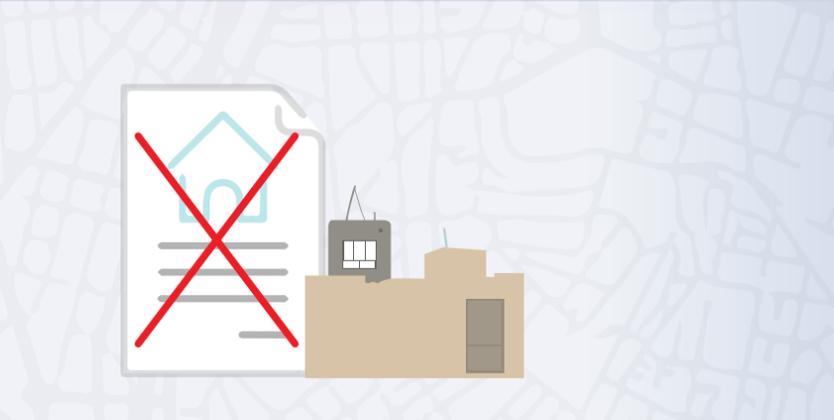
Properties with formal deed **15%**



Properties with informal/customary document **50%**



No property documents **35%**



1.3 Survey and Registration of Properties

City for All, a flagship action of the Urban National Priority Programme, is surveying and registering all properties within the boundaries of 12 Afghan municipalities. As of the end of March 2020, 831,000 properties have been surveyed and registered in Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad, Bamyan, Nili, and Farah. The main objective is to create an accurate digital record of all urban properties in the form of a cadastre.

Using geographic information systems, remote sensing, and other information and communication technologies, the government is collecting and analysing property data for the purpose of improving tenure security in urban areas. The digital data and map of all properties are verified through door-to-door household surveys.

The survey and registration of properties is carried out by four-member survey teams: one social organizer, two surveyors (one female, one male), and one engineer. The number of survey teams in each district (nahia) depends on the district size.

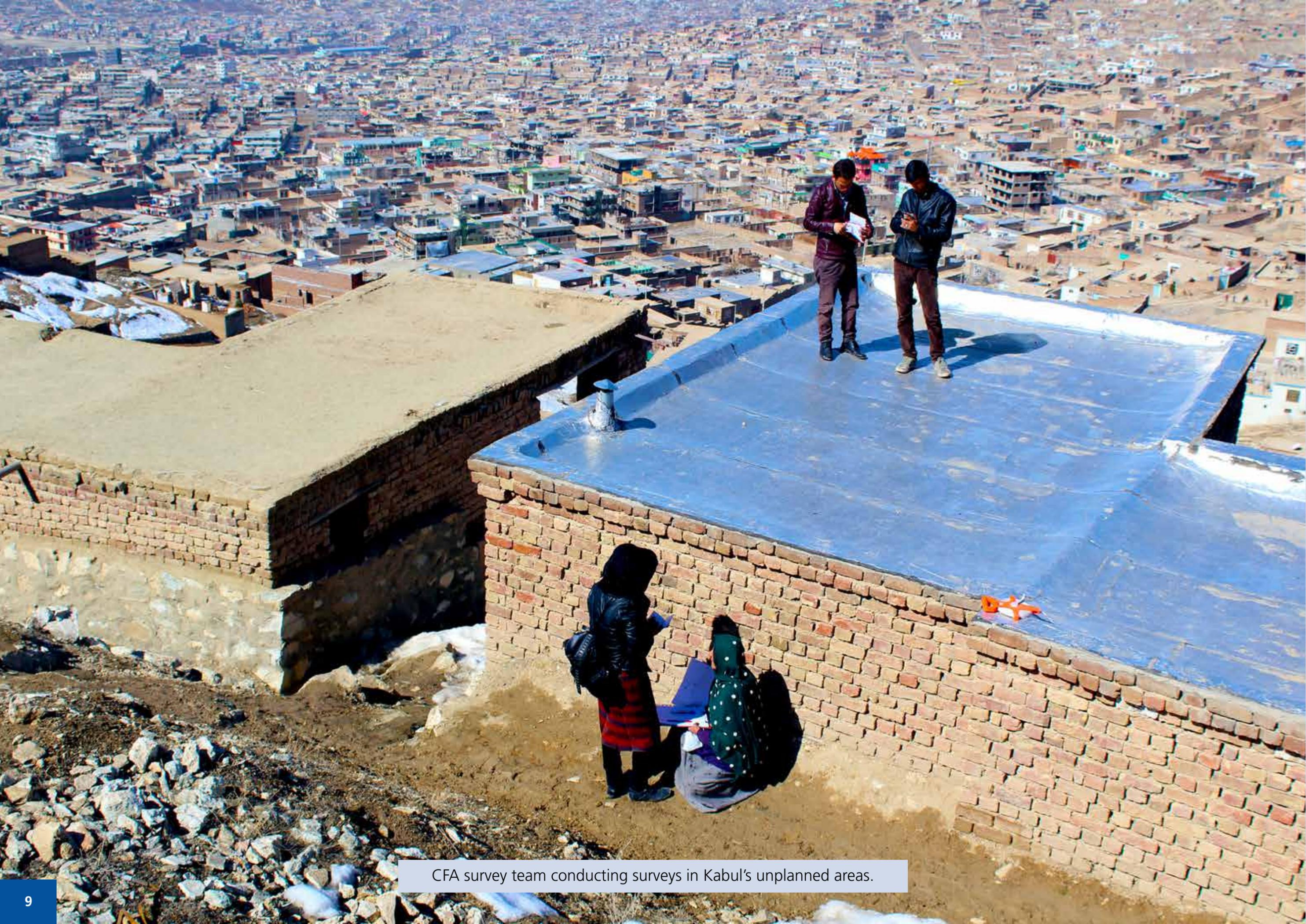
Social organizers conduct public awareness prior to the survey, visiting individual properties ahead of the surveyors to alert citizens about the requirements and benefits of the survey.

Surveyors prepare a map and list of all properties, both residential and commercial. When conducting the survey, they collect data related to the physical description of the property and its ownership. The surveyors have digital cameras and tablets to collect property data and store it in a database.

Engineers assist the surveyors with physical measurements and calculation of property areas and volumes. They also conduct random checks on survey procedures and survey data to control the quality of the data.

Survey teams are embedded in nahia offices (municipal district offices) and work under a City for All district team leader at the nahia level, in close cooperation with the municipal nahia staff and the Land Authority, ARAZI.

The systematic coordination of municipal and Land Authority staff in the survey and registration of properties exemplifies one of the main principles of the New Urban Agenda. The Quito Declaration calls for strengthened cooperation between national and local authorities as a pivotal element in any urbanization process.



CFA survey team conducting surveys in Kabul's unplanned areas.



CFA female surveyor collecting data from a resident of an informal area.



CFA surveyors taking measurements of a property in Kabul.

NAZIFA ORYAKHIL

Former CFA Team Leader

Kabul Municipality (District I)

“ *We have already surveyed all the properties of my district. During the survey, my team collected all required information about the property and its owner or household. These included property documents, if any; electricity bills; ID or tazkira of the household; and pictures of both the property and the household. This information was then registered in a database for the first time.* **”**





NANGEENA NOORI

CFA Surveyor

Kabul Municipality (District VII)

“ *This is a good job opportunity for me, and I am happy to work for these honourable people. Their properties should be secured without any fear of eviction.* **”**

QARI GUL ALAM

Resident of an informal area in Kabul city (District I)

“ *When engineers came to measure and sketch our house, I was briefed about the benefits of this innovative programme. The only thing that I want is to secure my house for my family without constantly fearing the threat of eviction and the fear of losing my property. This is why I am here in the district office to pay my fees in order to get my safayi notebook. I would like to thank the government and the donor, USAID, for this great initiative.* **”**





Qari Gul Alam, 43, is a resident of an informal area of Kabul District 1, which has already been surveyed. Mr. Alam, a handicapped father of six, believes that this programme is going to change his life.

GHULAM SAKHI

Head of the Community Development Council
Mazar-e-Sharif (District III)

“ *A team of UN-Habitat surveyors, social mobilizers, and engineers visited our Community Development Council and explained to us the purpose of City for All. This initiative is in the benefit of our people, and this is why I started the process from my own home. Our houses are now surveyed and registered in the municipality.* **”**





CFA female surveyor collecting property data from Mr. Ghulam Sakhi, a resident of a Mazar-e-Sharif planned area.

1.4 Public Validation of Survey Data

The data collected from property surveys requires a process of validation (or verification) by both municipal staff and beneficiaries to ensure the transparency of the process and accuracy of the data.

By conducting public validation of the survey data, the process ensures that municipalities and the Land Authority have accurate and reliable data. Municipal staff in the engineering department verify the survey data by comparing it with the municipal records and making any corrections. The data is also displayed for public validation.

Property maps with the names and pictures of each head of household are displayed in public spaces (mosques, nahia offices) for validation by community members for a determined period. This activity ensures that property owners/occupants have confidence in the survey process and its results. If the property data is disputed, community members can file a case with the Cadastral Territorial Unit Committee. The committee can then investigate and mediate between the disputing parties.





SAYED HASHMAT KHALIL

Resident of an informal area

Kabul (District VII)

“ *I saw my home, name, and picture displayed publicly, and now I have the certainty of securing the registration of my property. I hope to benefit from an occupancy certificate that will confer to me the right to stay.* **”**



A group of residents verifying surveyed properties in a public space.



Residents consulting data from surveyed properties displayed in a public space.

FATANA KHAIR ANDISH

CFA Social Organizer

“ *We are establishing councils in each standard gozar. Each council has 13 members, with 4 females. Either the chairperson or deputy of the council should be a woman. All members are elected democratically. Working with communities is very efficient, as communities decide about their needs.*

”





ENG. KHUSHAL YARI AHMADZAI

Head of Gozar Assembly XXI

Kabul Municipality (District VII)

“ *I am the head of Gozar Assembly XXI, and I am fully engaged with the CFA programme. The Cadastral Territorial Unit Councils solved more than ten land property disputes in my neighbourhood. Our residents are happy, and properties are ready to be issued with occupancy certificates.* **”**

1.5 Issuance of Occupancy Certificates

The issuance of occupancy certificates is the final objective of the urban survey and registration activity, ensuring land tenure security for all. The government has started to issue land occupancy certificates to residents of urban informal settlements in all 12 cities under the CFA programme. This initiative will enhance land tenure security for the 80 percent of the urban population of Afghanistan that live in informal settlements and create a huge social and economic impact in Afghan cities.

The Ministry of Urban Development and Land aims to issue 150,000 occupancy certificates in the 12 targeted cities by the end of 2020, providing better tenure security for all eligible urban residents.

Once the survey data is validated and settlements are cleared by the Cadastral Territorial Units, eligible properties according to the regulation are certified by a Beneficiary Identification Committee. Eligible properties are issued with land occupancy certificates, followed by the issuance of an invoice to be paid to a government account. The occupancy certificate fee varies by location and the area of the properties.

For residents of urban informal settlements, the issuance of occupancy certificates guarantees the right to stay in their homes without the threat of eviction. The formal registration of hitherto informal properties also encourages economic investment, increases property value, promotes economies of agglomeration, and empowers women by providing access to formal property rights. Occupancy certificates for properties on state land are issued jointly to heads of households and their spouses.



H.E. President Ashraf Ghani distributing occupancy certificates to residents of Jalalabad, July 2018.

MUHAMMAD ASHRAF GHANI

President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

“ *Our goal is to deliver a secure property for every Afghan woman and man, and to provide formal settlements for them.* **”**





H.E. President Ashraf Ghani distributing occupancy certificates to residents of Kabul, October 2017.

ARIFA RADMAL

Female recipient of an occupancy certificate
Herat

“ *I am very proud to receive my occupancy certificate from the President. I am very happy as a woman to benefit from this right. Now my property is secured.* **”**





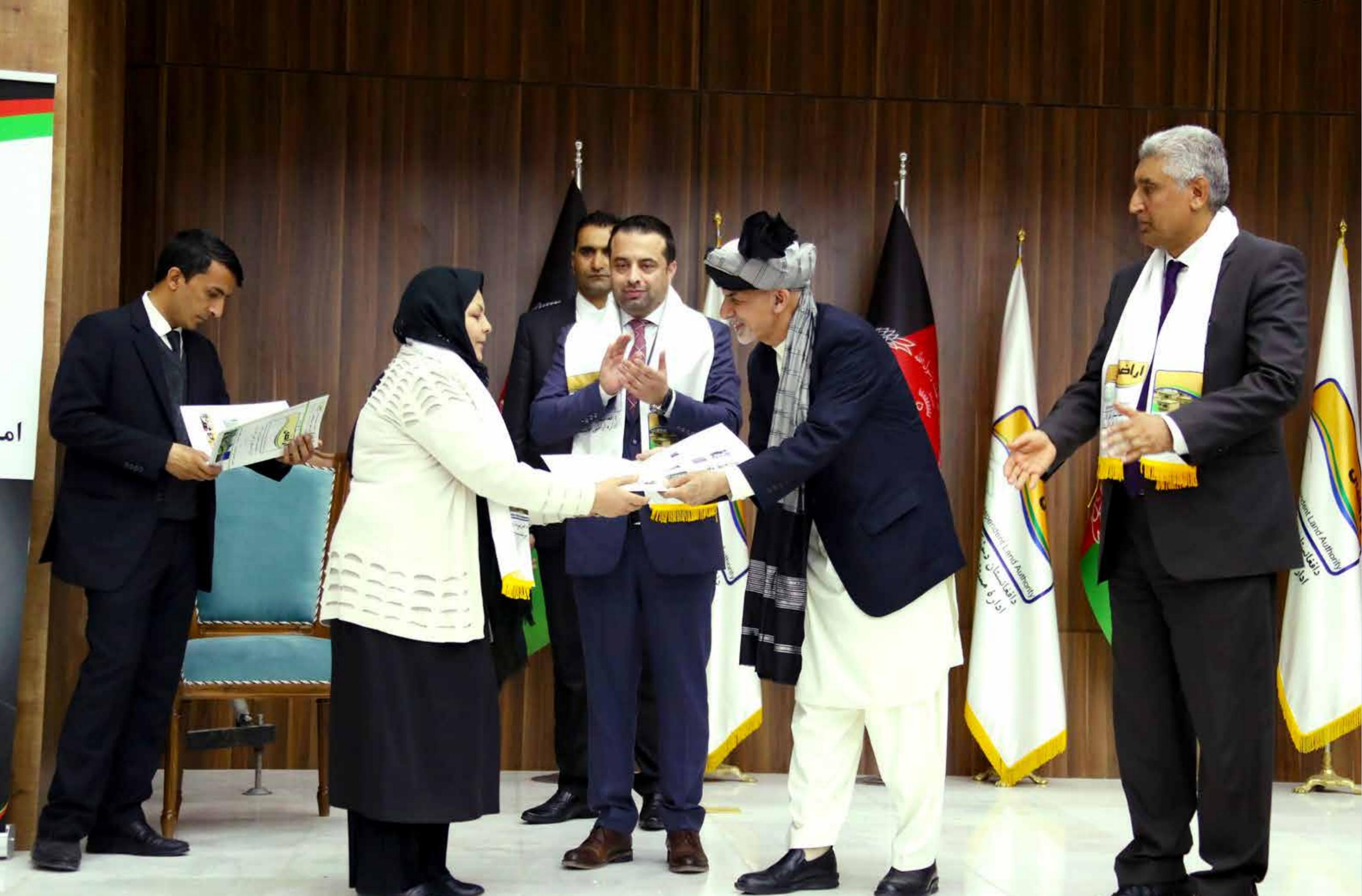
PARI YOUSUFI

Female recipient of an occupancy certificate
Herat

“ *I am very happy that I received my OC from the President himself. Thank you Mr. President for launching this programme (City for All) and thanks to Herat Municipality, Arazi and UN-Habitat for your great work. We can now receive our land documents securing our property with no threat or fear.* **”**



Residents of informal areas of Bamyan receiving occupancy certificates, June 2019.



H.E. President Ashraf Ghani presenting an occupancy certificate to a female head of a household in Herat, July 2018.

د اوښېدونکو مشورې له حکومتی مسؤلینو سره
کابل د اوښېدونکو مشورې له حکومتی مسؤلینو سره



Distribution of occupancy certificates to Kabul residents during the Fifth Edition of the National Urban Conference, December 2018.



LAYA MUSHRIF

Acting Director, Programme for Registration of
Urban Informal Settlements
Ministry of Urban Development and Land

“ Access to land and decent housing is a human right. I am very proud to be part of this very innovative initiative addressing a problem that is affecting the majority of our urban residents. Eighty percent live in informal areas. It is an enormous satisfaction to issue occupancy certificates to our people, especially women.

”

ESTABLISHING AN OCCUPANCY CERTIFICATE DIRECTORATE

An Occupancy Certificates Directorate has been established at the Land Authority, ARAZI, and Occupancy Certificate Units have been set up in each province. The directorate is responsible for the production and issuance of occupancy certificates. The provincial units are responsible for constituting and registering the statutory councils and committees for the occupancy certificate process. Cadastral Territorial Unit Councils are responsible for delineating unit boundaries and determining the eligibility of settlements for certification, in collaboration with ARAZI and relevant ministries. Beneficiary Identification Committees are responsible for adjudicating property and occupancy claims arising from the occupancy certificate process (e.g. the public validation of survey data), and for certifying properties for issuance of the certificates.





A female resident of Kabul (District 15) receives her first ever occupancy certificate from the Deputy District Manager, Mrs. Amina Mayar.

MAIMUNAH MOHD SHARIF

Executive Director of UN-Habitat

“ *Congratulations for these urban reforms that will bring positive social, economic, physical, and environmental changes to cities and people. UN-Habitat is extremely honoured to work very closely with the Ministry of Urban Development and Land, the Deputy Ministry of Municipalities, Kabul Municipality, and the people of Afghanistan in the implementation of these urban reforms.* **”**

The Executive Director addressing the International Symposium on Urban Development and Upgrading in Kabul, July 2019.



CHAPTER 2

MUNICIPAL FINANCE

2. MUNICIPAL FINANCE

Afghanistan has embarked on comprehensive reform of municipal finance. Afghan cities face considerable challenges delivering services and infrastructure due to weak urban governance, lack of legal and regulatory frameworks, and poor local revenue collection capacity. Municipalities have not been able to collect sufficient revenue to provide basic urban services or to even maintain existing ones.

For many years, the main source of municipal income has been the safayi fee, a levy towards the cost of local infrastructure and service provision. However, this fee has only been collected from properties that are formally registered in the municipality's records. This limited revenue base, estimated at around 30 percent nationally, helps to explain the low level of infrastructure development in many Afghan cities.

Residents of informal areas feel this deprivation most severely, and they often have low levels of trust and confidence in government. Additionally, government processes such as planning and budgeting are opaque and non-inclusive, further exacerbating the disconnect between citizens and government.

Adequate financing is a key component of well-managed urbanization. To bolster municipal revenues in Afghanistan, CFA is strengthening municipal systems and capacities for revenue generation as part of its efforts to strengthen the social contract between citizens and the state.

Municipal finance reform is not distinct from the urban land management reform explained in the previous chapter: the survey and registration of properties within the municipality boundaries enables the collection of the safayi fee for all properties in both formal and informal areas. The combination of a digital record of properties and safayi invoicing for all the registered properties allows municipalities to establish a revenue base with complete coverage.

The New Urban Agenda calls national and local governments to support 'effective, innovative, and sustainable financing frameworks and instruments enabling strengthened municipal finance and local fiscal systems in order to create, sustain, and share the value generated by sustainable urban development in an inclusive manner'. City for All is an effective, innovative, and sustainable framework that demonstrates the implementation of the New Urban Agenda through the invoicing and collection of safayi and investing increased revenues to improve infrastructure and services.



CFA revenue mobilizer distributing a safayi fee invoice to a resident.

SHOAIB RAHIM

Former Deputy Mayor
Kabul Municipality

“ *City for All is a government-led programme which supports the invoicing and collection of the safayi municipal fee in Kabul and other Afghan municipalities. The generation of additional revenue will be instrumental in improving the living conditions of communities in these municipalities, strengthening the social contract between citizens and their government, and thus building trust.* **”**



2.1 Key Facts on Municipal Finance Reform: The Safayi Fee

671,484 safayi invoices distributed by March 2020



299,658 safayi invoices paid by March 2020



2,312,589,399 Afis (USD 30 million)

in safayi revenues collected by March 2020



2.2 The Safayi Fee

The safayi fee is a very important source of income for municipalities, as it accounts for about half of all revenues for the major municipalities. Municipalities are empowered to collect safayi fees under Article 16 of the Municipal Services Tax Law. This article mandates municipalities to levy a fee on all immovable properties located within the municipal boundaries. The safayi fees are collected from residents, businesses, and owners of vacant land in exchange for the provision of municipal infrastructure and services.

City for All is assisting Afghan municipalities to put in place a system at the municipal level to collect the revenue necessary to provide basic urban services for citizens in both formal and informal areas. The programme is also introducing adjustments in the municipal finance system, including fairer assessment of safayi fees, more efficient and user-friendly invoicing and payment mechanisms, and new transparent and accountable expenditure management procedures that involve community representatives.

Since the CFA invoicing process started in October 2017, 2.3 billion Afs, equivalent to USD 30 million, was collected in Kabul and seven other cities by March 2020.



2.3 Safayi Calculation and Invoicing

City for All is putting in place an efficient, systematic, and automated method for safayi calculation and invoicing. This process requires an accurate digital record of all properties within the boundaries of the municipality. The property records should be updated in the property registry system being used in each municipality, either the Safayi Management Information System (SMIS) or the Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS). Calculation of safayi can be determined by the relevant database (IFMS/SMIS) as an automated function, as opposed to imprecise manual methods, which are time consuming and susceptible to manipulation and error.

The calculation and invoicing of safayi fees in the eight municipalities is carried out by teams of revenue mobilizers in each nahia. City for All has embedded over 100 revenue mobilizers in municipalities, who will go on to become full-time employees of the municipality. The revenue mobilizers support nahia offices to calculate, prepare, and deliver safayi invoices to the newly surveyed properties.

Using the automated safayi software, municipalities now issue a computer-generated safayi invoice to each individual property.

The safayi fee for each property is based on three factors: land value, building value, and the type of property (commercial, residential, institutional). With the support of CFA, a new and accurate method for estimating the market value of land has been developed, allowing for fairer calculation of safayi fees.

Thanks to the proper calculation, invoicing, collection, and expenditure of safayi, residents of informal areas are now fully fledged contributors towards meeting their basic infrastructure and service needs. This initiative is strengthening the social contract, building trust between municipalities and citizens, and improving living standards in cities across Afghanistan.





من پول صفایی خود را در وقت معین پرداخت می کنم،
تا از خدمات بهتر شهری مستفید شوم.



بنار د ټولو لپاره
شهر برای همه
City For All



آبادی، سرسبزی و تنظیف شهر وابسته به پرداخت پول صفایی
(خدمات شهری) به شاروالی مزار شریف میباشد!



بنار د ټولو لپاره
شهر برای همه
City For All



زه د صفایی پیسې په ټاکلي وخت ورکوم،
ترڅو غوره ښاري خدمتونه تر لاسه کړم!



بنار د ټولو لپاره
شهر برای همه
City For All



بهبود در خدمات شهری، نتیجه پرداخت پول صفایی
(خدمات شهری) به شاروالی بامیان است.



بنار د ټولو لپاره
شهر برای همه
City For All



Safayi fee billboards displayed in Afghan cities as part of a CFA awareness campaign.



MUHAMMAD AMAN AMAN

Mayor of Bamyan

“ *Improved basic services increased trust between the municipality and the citizens. Our citizens are now keen to pay their property fee, safayi, increasing the contribution tenfold to reach 3 million afghanis per year.* **”**

Depositing the Safayi Fee into a Banking System: Transparency, Accountability, and Trust

Citizens of Mazar-e-Sharif can now deposit their safayi fees directly into the bank account of the municipality as a guarantee of transparency and accountability. The citizens previously deposited the fee in cash at the municipal revenue department. The new method piloted by the Municipality of Mazar-e-Sharif stores the payment information in an electronic system. This transparent system helps to avoid corrupt practices, building trust with citizens and holding authorities accountable. The Mayor of Mazar-e-Sharif was the first user of this new payment method, which aims to be replicated in all CFA cities.



The Mayor of Mazar-e-Sharif inaugurates the new safayi payment method, July 2019.



CFA revenue mobilizers distributing safayi invoices in Kandahar, August 2018.

CHAPTER 3

STRATEGIC URBAN PLANNING

3. STRATEGIC URBAN PLANNING

With improvements in urban land management and municipal revenues, it is also important to improve citizen-responsive strategic urban planning and service delivery. In this regard, CFA's strategic urban planning pillar is supporting the Afghan government to undertake citizen-centred strategic action planning, project delivery, and street addressing. Participatory planning and the delivery of urban services in line with the expectations of citizens is important to encourage safayi payment and to demonstrate to citizens that the municipality is taking action to meet the needs of residents and thereby strengthening citizen confidence.

Sustainable Development Goal 11 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for making cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable, and the New Urban Agenda presents a toolbox for its localization, placing strategic urban planning as one of its tools for effective implementation.

In line with Sustainable Development Goal 11 and the New Urban Agenda, Afghanistan has introduced participatory strategic action planning and service delivery. The active participation of citizens in identifying, designing, and implementing projects for their local urban area is an innovative approach to help guide urbanization in Afghanistan. This experience has shown that designing a city is not the exclusive task of the municipal or central authorities, but rather citizens can and should play a key role in the process. The inclusive participatory process ensures that communities are actively involved in the decision-making processes for local urban development planning and project selection, which simultaneously helps build the level of trust between communities and government.



Kabul citizens during a participatory strategic action planning workshop.

ABDUL BAQI POPAL

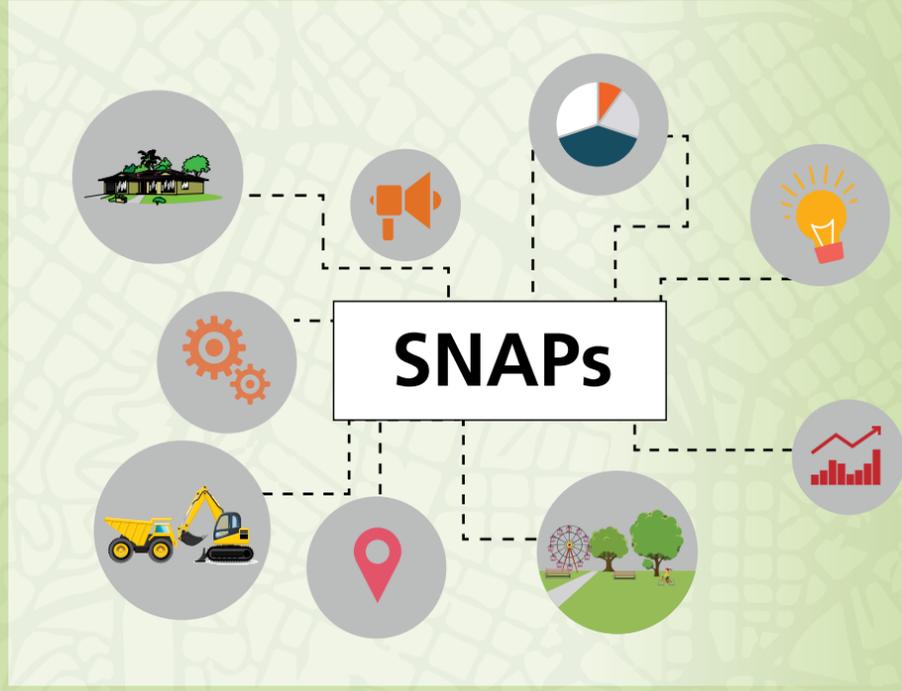
Deputy Minister of Municipalities

“ *The future of our country relies largely on the way our cities are planned and developed. Afghan cities are engines of our economy and play a strategic role in job creation and peace.* **”**

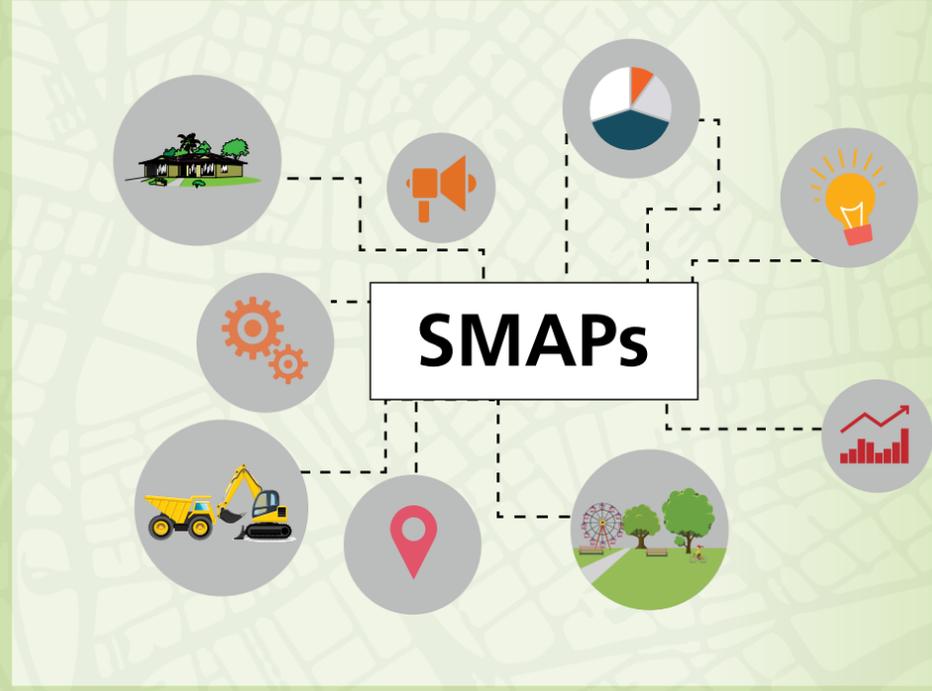


3.1 Key Facts on Strategic Urban Planning

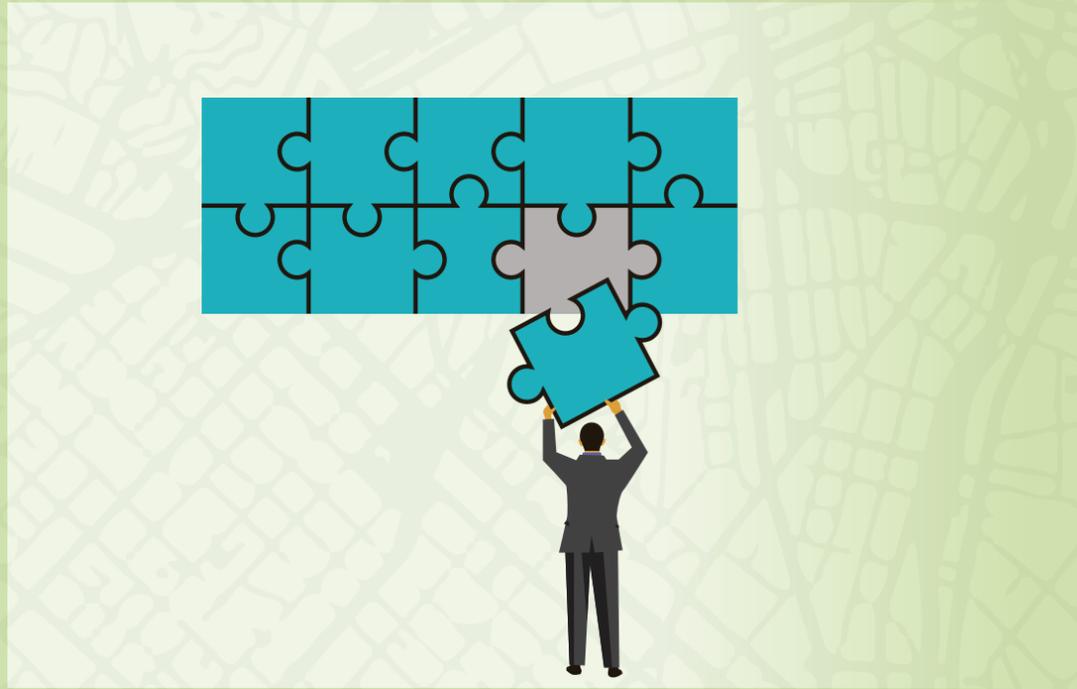
22 SNAPs prepared



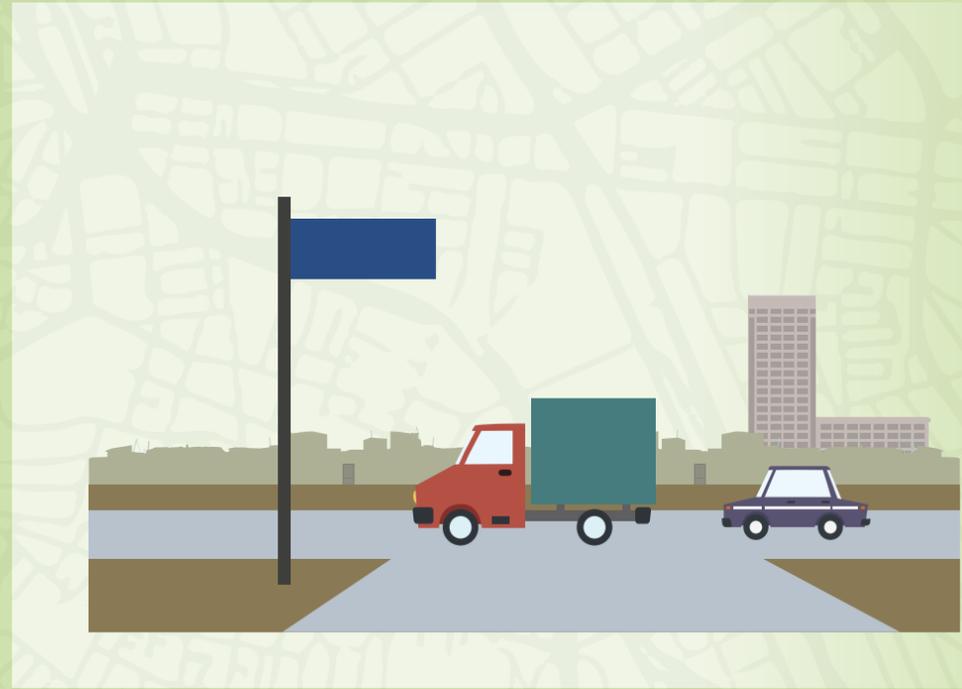
11 SMAPs prepared



139 projects implemented



Street addressing digitisation undertaken for 12 cities





Strategic action planning workshop with citizens, municipal authorities, and private sector representatives.

3.2 Strategic Action Planning

City for All is working with Afghan municipalities to undertake strategic action planning in Kabul and 11 other cities. Unlike traditional master planning, which is top-down with little involvement of citizens and which often results in unimplementable plans, strategic action planning is an inclusive participatory process that aims to identify priority projects to guide urbanization. With its focus on identification of quick-win priority projects, the approach is well suited to the rapidly urbanizing and largely informal nature of Afghan cities. Strategic action planning is a key process for identifying municipal projects for inclusion in municipal budgets and supporting the implementation of broader urban plans.

CFA supports municipal authorities to develop Strategic Nahia Action Plans (SNAPs) in 22 districts of Kabul, and Strategic Municipal Action Plans (SMAPs) in the municipalities of Herat, Kandahar, Jalalabad, Mazar-e-Sharif, Bamyan, Farah, Nili, Injil, Spin Boldak, Balkh, and Mirbachakot.

Strategic Action Plans are five-year strategies that provide an overview of the current urban situation and plans, set out the community's common vision for local urban development, and include Capital Investment Plans, which set out the details of priority projects, such as parks, playgrounds, roads, drainages, street lighting, etc. The plans aim to stimulate investments and expand service delivery to improve the living conditions for residents, while improving citizen–state relations and building the trust of residents.

The process for preparing the Strategic Action Plans is a participatory rapid spatial planning approach. Communities are put at the centre of the decision-making process through a series of participatory community workshops during which residents set out their vision for local urban development and propose priority projects. These projects are assessed for feasibility and aligned with the work of government partners and broader urban plans.

Priority projects are then implemented – using CFA block grants and municipal funding, including safayi revenue – to demonstrate to residents that the municipality is taking action to address the needs of citizens. The community also contributes funds to the projects, which helps ensure local ownership and project sustainability. SNAPs/SMAPs have been prepared for all nahias and municipalities, and numerous priority projects are being implemented.

Engagement with communities has been a central approach to supporting rehabilitation and development in Afghanistan since the early 1990s. This formed the basis of contributions to the formulation of the National Solidarity Programme, another flagship national development initiative that has engaged with some 4,600 communities in nine provinces to establish Community Development Councils, which identify and manage development activities.

This chapter will document some of these projects with images and testimonials of direct beneficiaries and authorities.

INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATORY PLANNING: DRAWING THE FUTURE SCHOOL OF DEBA

Deba is an 11-year-old schoolgirl from Kabul who participated in a community workshop in Kabul where residents were asked to identify priority development projects for their locality. For Deba it was very clear: she drew the school that she wants for her and her friends.

“ *This is the school that I want for my future.* **”**

This visioning exercise was conducted in one of the nahias (districts) of Kabul city as part of a participatory urban planning process that assists local communities to contribute to municipal investment plans by identifying and prioritizing local infrastructure projects, and provides grants to implement the projects. This process, the ‘People’s Process’, is used to produce Strategic Nahia Action Plans, empowering urban communities to build a better Afghan future.

Establishing participatory urban planning procedures at the local level is one of the priorities of City for All.





Ribbon-cutting ceremony for a community project in Kabul (District 10) led by the Team Leader, Eng. Maryam Azizi.



Construction of a paved road in Kabul, a project selected by communities from the nahia's Strategic Action Plan.



Before



After

Construction of a paved road in Kabul (District 11), a project selected by communities through participatory urban planning.



Construction of a street in Kabul (District 7), a project selected by communities through participatory urban planning.



Construction of a public park and sports complex in Bamyan.



Before



After

Street lighting project in Kandahar.



Inauguration of the public works for the construction of a water canal in Farah city.



The Governor of Herat Province inaugurating a community-selected project.



Road construction works of a community-selected project in Nili.



ZAHRA AHMADI

Mayor of Nili

“ *I am very honoured to see our communities in Nili participating in the selection of projects and decision-making processes of their city. The reconstruction of Afghanistan should always be inclusive and incorporate the voices of all: women, girls, boys, men, elders, internally displaced, returning refugees, street vendors, etc.* **”**

3.3 Street Addressing

City for All is also developing a street addressing system for Kabul and 11 other municipalities. Street addressing is a system of maps, street signs, and property plates that show street names and designated property numbers. The key outputs of the project are street signs for all streets and property plates for all properties in the target municipalities.

Until now, Afghan cities have lacked a comprehensive street addressing system. But consider this: How can residents find their way around a city without street names? How can emergency services efficiently navigate a city? How can urban and postal services be delivered?

The street addressing project will bring numerous benefits to residents and municipal authorities. A comprehensive street addressing system makes it easy for city residents to get around the city. It is vital for urban service delivery, such as postal delivery, medical care, and emergency response. It helps city authorities deliver urban services and new infrastructure projects such as roads, schools, water pipes, and electricity lines. Street addressing also provides an opportunity to document and formalize existing historical street names and thus conserve cultural heritage. In an era of digital communication tools, it will improve navigation to get around the city more easily.

Further, a comprehensive street addressing system also underpins achievement of the urban-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda. For example, it contributes to achieving SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) by providing the foundation for informal settlement upgrading and inclusive urban planning, which bolsters many of SDG 11's targets. Street addressing is also vital for progress towards other SDGs, such as SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), as having better addresses contributes to rising productivity and income gains (Target 8.1). It also supports SDG 9 (sustainable infrastructure) and its target to support economic development with a focus on equitable access for all (Target 9.1).



سرک بلاک های ربانی زاده
Blockhay-e-Rabani Zada St

Kabul Municipality
S135-29

شاره های کابل
ناحیه چهار
کوله پشته

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An artist's rendering of a street sign design for Kabul city.

AHMAD ZAKI SARFERAZ

Mayor of Kabul

“ *Kabul doesn't have a proper addressing system yet, and its citizens struggle to find places. Directions are based on landmarks, hills, shops, houses, the colour of doors, and other signs. As Kabul keeps expanding rapidly, citizens need an accurate addressing system. In Kabul Municipality, we are putting in place a new addressing system that will solve these problems.* **”**





KABUL MUNICIPALITY STREET ADDRESSING TEAM

“ *We are working as a team to develop a proper addressing system for streets and houses. The new system consists of street signs and property plates that will help our citizens easily navigate the city. Addresses will now be available in Google Maps in a city where our citizens are connected to the internet on their phones. We believe that the new system will improve the quality of services and the lives of our people.* **”**

A RESIDENT OF KABUL

“ *The new addressing system is amazing! If I want to buy something through online shopping, I will give my street name and house number and I will be able to receive the items I bought. Now I can also give my home address to a taxi driver to bring my relatives to my house without unnecessary detours.* **”**





A worker installing a door number plate in an informal settlement of Kabul.

PROPERTY PLATES

“ Houses need a distinctive marker that is easily recognizable, but the system chosen most of the time, which defines the address using the street number of the house on the street, and the city, was adopted only after much trial and error. ”

The World Bank, *Street Addressing and the Management of Cities* (2005)



CHAPTER 4

LOCALIZING THE NEW URBAN AGENDA IN AFGHANISTAN

4. LOCALIZING THE NEW URBAN AGENDA IN AFGHANISTAN

The recognition of the transformative power of urbanization as an engine for sustainable development is a fundamental paradigm shift initiated by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with Sustainable Development Goal 11 dedicated to cities and human settlements. The New Urban Agenda, the UN road map to achieving sustainable urbanization adopted in Habitat III, complements this vision with a set of actions and policy recommendations for the localization of the urban-related SDGs.

The main purpose of the New Urban Agenda is to unlock the correlation between urbanization and development through specific interventions for national, subnational, and local governments. Although there is no magical solution or universal recipe for all urban-related challenges in cities worldwide, the New Urban Agenda unveils an action-oriented plan focused on the strategic role of cities as drivers of socio-economic development, environmental sustainability, and job creation. It is a collective vision and a political commitment that targets the so-called fundamentals of urbanization: a national vision for urbanization, urban legislation, municipal finance, urban planning and design, and the local implementation of these principles.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has embraced this vision through its systematic Afghanization of the New Urban Agenda. This chapter describes the localization of the New Urban Agenda and showcases City for All as a unique pilot programme that puts in action these principles with considerable success and tangible results.



Capacity-building sessions on the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda with Kabul University students.



Minister Saadat Mansoor Naderi attending the 26th Session of the UN-Habitat Governing Council on the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Nairobi (Kenya), May 2017.

SAYED SADAT MANSOOR NADERI

Former Minister of Urban Development and Housing

“ We are embarking on a path to reverse the three decades of destruction and abandonment that has come to define our cities. The single-most important challenge that is pervasive across Afghan cities and our country is the migration crisis. By the end of this year alone, 1 million Afghans will be on the move. Just by September this year, 350,000 Afghan refugees and internally displaced persons have either returned or are displaced from their homes. ”



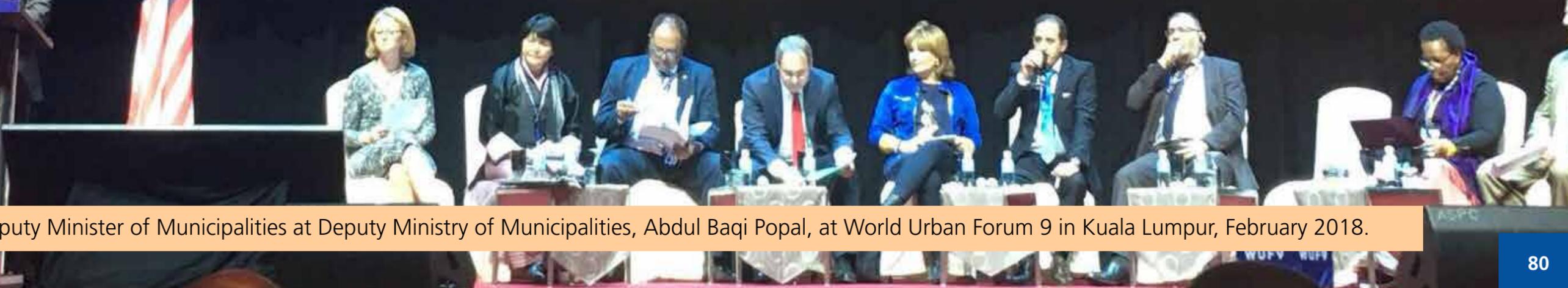
Presentation by the Minister at Habitat III, the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in Ecuador, October 2016.



Cities 2030,
Cities for all
Implementing the
New Urban
Agenda

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#wuf9
#NewUrbanAgenda



Deputy Minister of Municipalities at Deputy Ministry of Municipalities, Abdul Baqi Popal, at World Urban Forum 9 in Kuala Lumpur, February 2018.



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Afghanistan's delegation participating at a World Urban Forum 9 side event on the reintegration of displaced populations through land tenure and housing, Kuala Lumpur, February 2018.

4.1 A National Vision for Urbanization: The Urban National Priority Programme

One of the novelties introduced by the New Urban Agenda is the prominent role of national governments in defining and leading the urbanization process. Many central governments do not recognize their responsibility in achieving quality urbanization, especially in developing countries. Their role remains essential, and the New Urban Agenda makes an urgent call for central governments to assume their responsibility. In many countries, urbanization is wrongly understood as an issue exclusively for mayors and local authorities. Relegating urbanization to local governments has proved to be a poor practice that does not bring all the benefits of urbanization as a driver of prosperity. National governments should take the lead in establishing legislative, financial, and coordination frameworks with local and subnational authorities.

The future of Afghanistan is urban, and therefore the central government has taken the lead in defining a vision that identifies sustainable urbanization as one of the drivers to achieve development, self-reliance, and peace. The adoption of the Urban National Priority Programme as a national plan has placed urbanization at the heart of the development plans of the country. Establishing a national urbanization vision is of crucial importance, as the country's urban transition has already commenced. One-fourth of Afghanistan's population is already residing in urban areas, and by 2060 one in two Afghans will do so. Despite the immense challenges faced by Afghan cities, its urban areas already account for more than 50 percent of the national gross domestic product. This vision ratifies the strategic correlation between urbanization and development as enshrined in the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda.

The Urban National Priority Programme calls for the development of a National Urban Policy and a National Housing Policy, and presents City for All as one of the flagship programmes for achieving the plan and the national urban vision. By forging this vision and putting it in place through specific actions, Afghanistan becomes a role model in implementing the New Urban Agenda.



4.2 Urban Legislation

The New Urban Agenda makes an urgent call to national governments, warning them about the adverse consequences of urbanization without rules and regulations. In Afghanistan, the lack of regulatory frameworks has contributed to an urbanization model in which 80 percent of the urban population does not possess any formal land document or title. Unplanned urbanization has resulted in informal and spontaneous settlements that do not benefit from the outcomes of planned urbanization. Instead, residents do not have incentives for capital investment and economies of agglomeration due to the constant threat of eviction and lack of basic services. In order to achieve the major land reform brought by City for All aiming at formalizing all informal settlements, the government has passed important urban legislation defining and legitimizing the reform's scope and implementation. Section 1.1 of this book refers to these regulations in depth, namely the Occupancy Certificate Regulation and the Presidential Decree on the Identification and Allocation of State Land to Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons.

The legal framework for the issuance of occupancy certificates under City for All has opened the door to the distribution of thousands of occupancy certificates, which will guarantee land rights to millions of Afghan citizens, including women.



H.E. President Ashraf Ghani chairing the High Urban Council.

4.3 Urban Planning and Design

Urban planning and design is an integral part of the urbanization process. The lack of adequate planning for the proper design of a city deprives it of the advantages of well-planned urbanization and undermines its capacity to generate value. The New Urban Agenda envisages cities that are participatory, promote civic engagement, and engender a sense of belonging and ownership among all their inhabitants. The City for All programme contributes to these ideals through strategic urban planning at the local level (see Chapter 3).

Putting citizens at the heart of the decision-making processes is a social and cultural revolution in countries such as Afghanistan. Strategic urban planning is a fundamental pillar in City for All, bringing together women, children, and all community voices through the development of strategic action plans. Ensuring a common vision of the city through the provision of quality public spaces, streets, and services has proved to be the most efficient tool to build trust and confidence with citizens. But above all, participatory urban planning is stimulating the urban economy and improving the quality of life of millions of citizens, especially women and children, who have suffered for many years the devastating effects of war and conflict. Building the city through strategic action planning is a clear demonstration of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the positive outcomes of good planning and design: order and peace in Afghan cities.



Female residents taking part in a participatory strategic planning workshop in Kabul (District 4).

4.4 Municipal Finance

Urbanization is an endogenous source of value. The New Urban Agenda sees urbanization from an investment perspective and not as a cost: the value it generates is much higher than its cost. The systematization of the collection of municipal revenues in Afghan cities through City for All has expanded the revenue base and increased the income for local authorities, as described in Chapter 2.

City for All serves as an authoritative study that demonstrates the enormous value generated by sound municipal financial systems. The programme goes beyond expectations, as the the new procedures put in place are preventing corrupt practices from the past. City for All also urges municipalities to ensure that the increased revenue is properly shared – benefitting all residents. The beneficiaries are not the rich sectors of the population, but the vast majority of Afghan urban residents, who live in underserved areas. The additional revenue is reinvested in the 80 percent of the population who do not have basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity, and roads.

The safayi fee is a practical example of the efficient implementation of the New Urban Agenda. Afghan municipalities have multiplied their revenue capacity, and this has also generated a higher level of trust in the system among citizens. They are now willing to pay because they see the results and their improved living conditions.



A female revenue mobilizer printing a safayi invoice from the newly launched electronic system.



Afghanistan Mayors meeting at the City For All Conference on Safayi and Municipal Finances, Kabul, 14th July 2018.

4.5 Local Implementation

The combination of the three fundamentals of urbanization (legislation, planning, and finance) coupled with the strong determination of the national government to assume its responsibilities in defining an urban vision is a strategic choice by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan that will bring improved quality of life, job creation, and peace.

The Afghanization of the New Urban Agenda is an empirical example of how well-planned, well-financed, and well-governed urbanization is transforming the lives of millions and will continue to do so, as Afghanistan has an urban future. Quality urbanization fulfils very relevant social, economic, cultural, and environmental functions. The way Afghan cities are planned and financed will determine the levels of poverty or wealth in the urban areas.

City for All is a pioneering programme that addresses all the dimensions of sustainable urbanization: helping to end poverty and hunger in urban areas; reducing inequalities; promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth; and achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in order to fully harness their vital contribution to sustainable development.

The implementation of the New Urban Agenda through the City for All programme contributes to the implementation and localization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in an integrated manner, and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, including Goal 11 on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

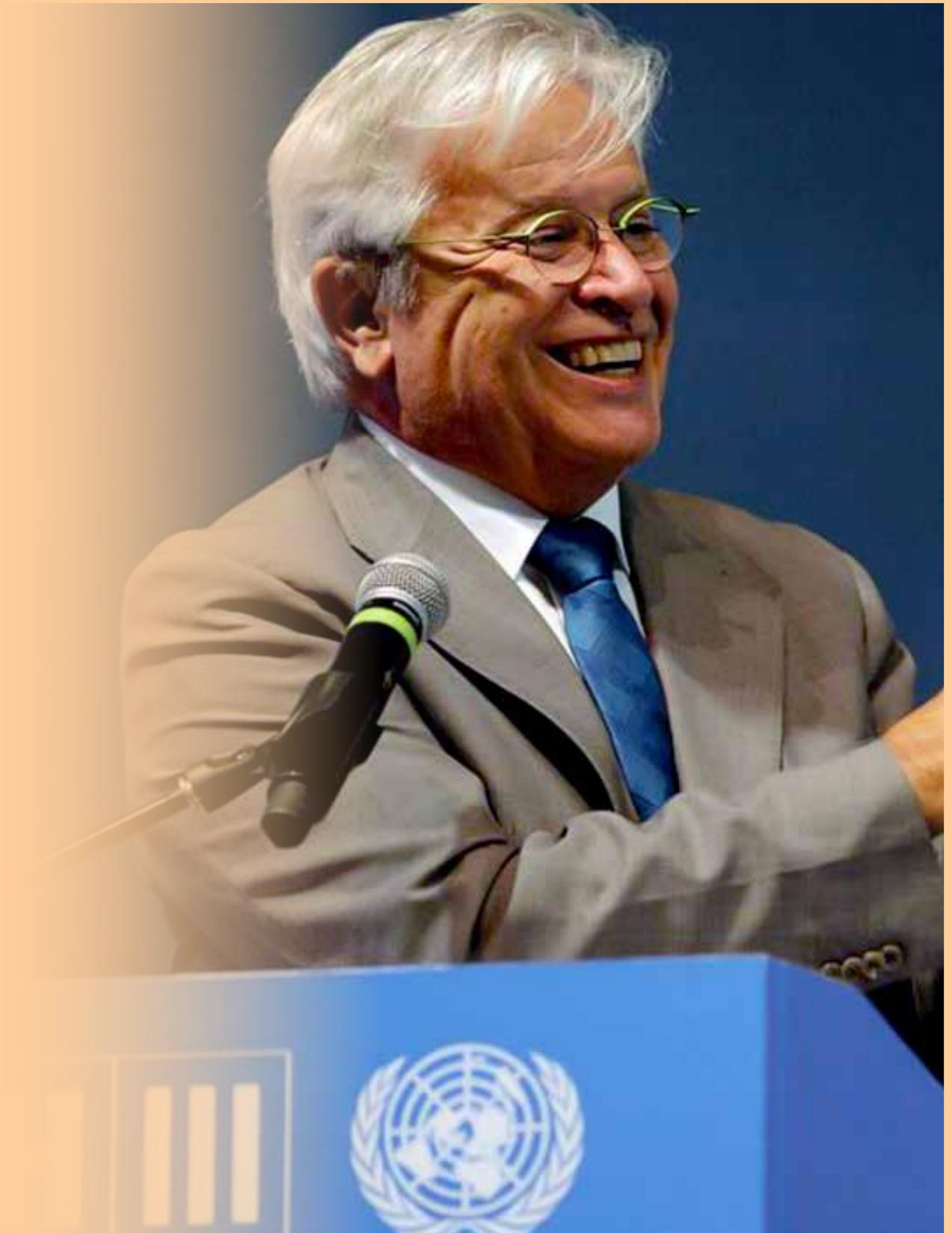


CFA steering committee chaired by the Minister of Urban Development and Land.

DR. JOAN CLOS

Secretary-General of Habitat III

“ *I am delighted to see Afghanistan’s decision to prioritize urbanization at the heart of the country’s development strategies. Urbanization is not a cost, but an investment. Investing in well-planned, well-financed, and well-governed urbanization can harness economic development, job creation, and peace. The quality and quantity of urban output is highly related to the quality and characteristics of urbanization. Particularly important is the qualitative design of urban legislation, the physical plan, and urban financial systems.* **”**



The Secretary-General of Habitat III in Quito, Ecuador.

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United Nations Human Settlements Programme
(UN-Habitat)

Kabul, Afghanistan

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