

Local Administration Administrative Systems in Arabic Countries of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq and UAE

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Abstract: In order to assess the level of challenges facing Local Administration Units (LAUs) in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, and the United Arab Emirates, this study will examine the attitudes and perspectives of 400 randomly selected heads and employees of local units, mayors and employees of municipalities, and leaders of provincial departments. Finding important and successful reform strategies to address such issues is one of the study's specific goals. Qualitative methods were used in this investigation. Thirty people in all were purposefully selected for in-depth, in-person consultations, with a focus on determining the main reform initiatives that worked. According to the study's findings, Jordan's local government faces significant challenges related to capacity building, fiscal issues, environmental protection responsiveness, and public engagement. According to the survey, another significant obstacle is the lack of finance and the autonomy of local units in overseeing resident funding. Building capacity accounted for the final challenge. The most important reform measures that must be taken to address the issues facing LAUs are the strengthening of employee training and development, the abandonment of central pre-checking frameworks, the creation of an efficient mechanism to bridge the relationship between municipalities and citizens, the improvement of an environmental control framework to reduce pollution, and increased government budgetary support.

Keywords: local administration, municipalities, local government units, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq and united Arabia emirate.

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Introduction

One example of a decentralized administration is local government. Jordan Because Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, and the United Arab Emirates have a very lengthy history of devolution, their residents rely on local institutions, such as municipalities and councils, to provide them with necessary services that the central government is unable to provide directly. Interest in local governance has grown during the past 10 years. This concern was about allowing the private sector to participate in a more substantial growth responsibility, changing the role of the state, and expanding public participation in the governing process. The World Bank's data on societal advancement in a variety of fields, such as decentralization and government rethinking and innovation, also reflects this concern. The local government thus plays a crucial part in national development and is involved in a key position inside the governing framework (Yaghi, 2008).

In order to carry out a variety of political, managerial, and social duties, local administration units (LAUs) are crucial. It offers residents a variety of services essential to the population's high standard of living and prosperity. It serves as a conduit between the general public and the federal government. Accordingly, they are granted an institutional framework, lawful character, and a certain amount of budgetary and administrative independence (Al Kayed, 1999). Governorate councils, municipalities, and local councils are the auxiliary levels that have formed Jordan's LAUs since the decentralization Law No. 49 of 2015 and the Municipalities Law No. 41 of 2015 were announced. With the exception of the Governorate Council, where 15% of the councilors are appointed by the central government, each of these This is an open access article under the [CC BY-NC](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) license

local government levels has an elected chairman and council members.

Numerous studies were carried out by international organizations; for instance, the World Bank, working with the United Nations Development Program, has explained that local governments have a number of challenges, such as administrative, financial, and technological issues (UN, 2007; Wang and Berman, 2000). In addition, a group of researchers discovered that LAUs face numerous challenges related to technical proficiency, financial management, resident needs responsiveness, capacity building, and environmental preservation (Kauneckis and Anderson, 2006; Nicholl, 2006).

In Jordan, various LAU levels deal with a number of challenges that collectively make it difficult for them to carry out their obligations. Employees at LAUs complain about ineffectiveness and excessive HR that goes beyond their actual demands. The literature on local administration emphasized the value of growth and efficacy in local units (Taamneh, 2019). Although the financial circumstances of local government units vary, most teams struggle with a shortage of cash, which prevents them from carrying out development plans or improvement projects.

Additionally, (LAUs) experiences managerial and financial routine practice in their dealings and relations with central government; this represents a severe problem to its ability to respond to citizens' needs. The rapidly growing population and the refugee waves from Palestine and Syria have placed additional



burdens (LAUs). This has addressed water shortage, housing, pollution, and health and education (Jaber and Probert, 2001; Alnsour, 2014).

It appears that there is a political insistence to reform (LAUs) in Jordan. This is reflected in his Majesty the King in his speech before the parliament in February 2018: "citizens must be engaged with the decision-making process and enhance his role in public participation."

The effort to determine the difficulties faced by LAUs in Jordan and offer reform strategies is what gives this study its significance. Additionally, the study's efforts to incorporate local leaders' participation in the creation of the required reform strategies give it more significance.

Identifying the major challenges and problems facing LAUs in Jordan as well as the reform strategies suggested to the decision-makers were the goals of this study.

Statement of the Problem

The framers of the Constitutional policies on local government administrative system, specifically regarding sectional countries like the Arabian nation-state, contemplate grassroots development and transformation with Local government as the third tier of government and closer to the people. Several attempts to restructure the local government system to make it more viable and efficient have lasted over four decades, with milestone achievements recorded in the notorious 1976 reforms. Since then, development in all ramifications is still far from reality, as the condition of rural dwellers has become pitiable and intolerable. Furthermore, the dearth of development at the grassroots level is not unconnected with how the constitution provided for establishing, financing, structuring, and maintaining local government, as captured in their constitutional draft as amended. The State has constantly abused the provision of that section, culminating in the financial starvation of local government through the instrumentality of the Joint Local Government State Account. The result is the impoverishment of rural dwellers and a colossal dearth of development at the grassroots and, by extension. It is this lugubrious and vexatious but pitiable scenario that propels the study to reverse the ugly trend through appropriate recommendations; hence, put Arabian state on the part of developmental comparison.

Objectives of the Study

The study's general objective is to x-ray the legal basis of the local government system in Arabian countries and its effect on the development initiative. Specifically, the paper seeks to: Exposing the danger inherent in the provision of sectional amendmeant of their constitutions. In a related vein, the paper also seeks to underscore in specific terms how the eroding of local government autonomy has affected the quest for development and finally, the study seeks to underline categorically the problems of the local Government system in Arabian countries among others.

Operational Definition/clarification of Terms:

Local Government:

Is a unit of administration with defined territory, powers, and administrative authority with relative autonomy, and administrative authority can be elected or appointed exclusively by the people (Ojong, 2002). It is a local-level government that

operates through a legally established representative council, which exercises specific powers within designated areas (Garba et al., 2018). Local government is a legally established political subdivision of a nation that possesses considerable authority over local matters, including the power to levy taxes and mandate labor for designated purposes. The governing body of this entity is either elected or locally appointed (Adedire, 2016).

Administrative System:

Local government administrative systems are the structures and processes through which local communities are governed. In Nigeria, local governments are recognized as the third tier of government, with the aim of bringing governance closer to the people at the grassroots level. They are designed to provide essential services and address the specific needs of their communities.

Grassroot Participation:

Grassroots participation refers to the involvement of ordinary citizens in decision-making processes, particularly at the local or community level. It's about empowering people to have a say in issues that directly affect their lives and communities, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility. This can range from participating in local government, community projects, or social movements.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Clarification:

Introduction

The village headman or tribe chief is the lowest level of local administration in prehistoric societies. Local governments in contemporary countries typically possess some of the same authority as national governments. They typically have some ability to increase revenue, however this may be restricted by national laws. One of the most important issues in public administration and governance is the subject of municipal autonomy, or what powers the local government has or ought to have. Countries have very different local government structures, and even in those with comparable setups, nomenclature frequently differs. The terms state, prefecture, district, city, municipality, shire, and so on are frequently used to refer to local government entities. Nonetheless, all of these terms are frequently used colloquially in various nations, and local government is the official branch of the federal government.

Concept of Local Government:

Local government is defined differently by many academics. This is due to different viewpoints about the true function of local government, which vary depending on the setting. On the other hand, local government can be described as local government carried out by representative councils created by law to exercise particular authorities within designated regions (Local Government Reform Handbook, 1992).

"Level of government exercised through representative councils, established by law to exercise geographical area with common social and political ties" is how Oni (1993) defines local government. These powers should give the council substantial control over local 28 affairs as well as the staff, and institutional and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services

and to determine and implement projects so as to complement the activities of the state and federal governments in their areas.

Local government system can be defined as:

Representative councils created by law to exercise particular functions within a designated area serve as the local government's vehicle. In order to guarantee that local initiative and response to local needs and conditions are maximized through the devolution of functions to these councils and through the active participation of the people and their traditional institutions, these powers should grant the council significant control over local affairs as well as the staff, institutional, and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine and implement projects. (Awa 2006:96) These definitions stem from the United Nations Office for Public Administration's definition of local government, which is as follows: A political division of a nation or (in federal system), state, which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs, including the powers to impose taxes or to exact labour for prescribed purpose (UN Report, 1960:3). The governing body of such an entity is elected or otherwise locally selected. (Quoted in Ola, 1984:7).

The common denominator in these definitions is that local government is that local government is a subordinate system of government and has the authority to undertake public activities. (Eneanya, 2012:15). This authority has structures and functions, collects revenue, experiences some challenges and is controlled by central authority. These definitions are encompassing and most widely accepted and have theoretical implications. From the definitions, certain characteristics of local government stand out.

Local government is ordinarily understood as the administration of locality, a village, a town, a city or any other area smaller than the state by a body representing the local inhabitants, possessing a fairly large amount of autonomy, raising at least a part of its revenue through local taxation and spending its income on services which are regarded as local and therefore as distinct from state and central services.

According to 1976 guidelines for local government reform, local government is government at local level exercised through representative councils established by law to exercise specific powers within defined areas. These powers should give the council substantial control over local affairs as well as the staff and institutional and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine activities of the state and federal governments in their areas and to ensure through devolution of functions to the councils and through active participation of the people and traditional institutions that local initiative and response to local needs and conditions are maximized.

The United Nations office for Public Administration also refers to local government as a political subdivision of a nation or in a federal system, state, which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs, including the powers to impose taxes or to exact labour for prescribed purposes. The governing body of such an entity is elected or otherwise locally selected.

Bello-Imam (2007) conceives that local government is quite different from local administration. He therefore describes local government as a unit of administration with defined territory, powers and administrative authority with relative authority which

administrative authority could be elected or appointed exclusively by the people. But he sees local administration as usually constituting local the administration of local communities by utilizing local agents appointed by and responsible to an external agent, which could be a state, regional or provincial authority or national government. Aborisade (2006) holds the opinion that the reasons for creating local governments are identical to that of the states in terms of agitation, want, need and ethnic pride and not necessarily based on the ability to generate fund for survival except perhaps Lagos and Kano states where local governments are viable because of the nature of their economy. He therefore accounts for the creation of local governments in Nigeria from 301 in 1976 to 449 in 1989 to 589 in 1991 and to 774 in 1996.

Rothchild (1994) highlights the three essential characteristics of local government as a set of local authorities or institutions with a separate autonomy and a legal status distinct from that of the central government. Also, as the power of the autonomous local institutions to raise their own revenue and spend it on the discharge of their functions as assigned to them by the laws and as the power of the local institutions to make decisions as responsible organs in their own right and not as an extension of the central administration.

Gboyega 1987 posits four epochs in the development of local government in Nigeria. The first epoch, according to him, spanned the inception of colonial rule up till the early 1950s when the Native Authority System was rejected in both the Eastern and Western Regions. However, the local government reforms in the Eastern Region in 1951 and the Western Region in 1952 marked the beginning of another epoch in the history of local government in Nigeria.

The military coup of 1966 terminated the second phase of local government system and marked the start of a new epoch in the history of local government. The fourth epoch of local government system in Nigeria according to him came with the 1976 local government reforms, which have survived and seem destined to mark a major landmark in the development of local government in Nigeria.

Bello-Imam (2007) goes further to describe the features of local government reforms in Nigeria after 1976. He describes 1988 reform as sweeping reform which provided opportunity for the citizenry to participate more in local government administration. To him, 1988 reforms centred on the local government autonomy in Nigeria, when local governments have direct share of the federation account and no longer through the state. According to him, the 1991 reform was internal structure reform which extended presidentialism to the local government system in Nigeria.

Dapun et al (2010) continues with the review of local government system in 1999 constitution which provided for a democratically elected local government council in section 7 of the constitution.

The 2003 local government reform addressed the fundamental problems facing local government over the years which include high cost of electioneering campaign, non performance of the local government and funding of the local governments in Nigeria.

Okotoni (2006) classifies the sources of local government revenue in Nigeria into two; external and internal sources. The

external funds mainly consist of statutory allocation from the federal and state governments. This source, according to him, forms the bulk of local government finance in Nigeria. The internal funds are generated through internally generated revenue which a local government generates through its own effort. These include taxes, rates, levies and fines collected locally. He therefore points that the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria provides many opportunities for local governments to raise reasonable revenue that could make them to enjoy some measure of financial independence.

Characteristics of Local Government

- Almost all local government bodies share certain characteristics;
- That local government is a subordinate system of government;
- A continuing organization;
- The authority to undertake public activities;
- The ability to enter into contracts;
- The right to sue and be sued; and
- The ability to collect taxes; and
- Has the power to make policies, prepare budgets and have a measure of control over its own staff.

Reasons for Establishing Local Government

The following are the reasons for establishing local government (Eneanya, 2012: 19-20):

- Local government provides the platform for people to conduct their own affairs in line with local needs aspirations, resources and customs which they alone understand better than any outside;
- Provides framework for mobilizing and sustaining popular zeal and initiative in development;
- Serves as a hedge against over-concentration of power at the centre which often leads to tyranny; • It acts as a two-way channel of communication between the local population and the central government.
- It aggregates local interest and transmits these to the centre and also keeps the local population informed about central government policies and programmes;
- Local government serves as socio-economic laboratory for testing new proposals for government organization and sound economic policies; and
- Acts as training ground for leadership positions at the national level.

Conceptual Framework: Conceptual Discourse:

Local Government Administrative System In Jordan

Local government system in Jordan

- Country Profile
- Official Name of the State-Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- Form of Government-Unitary Parliamentary
- Constitution- Monarchy
- Official Language(s)-Arabic
- Currency-Jordanian Dinar
- Area-89,342 km²
- Total Population-10,171,480 (2018)

- Urban Population Rate 67.8% (2018)
- Capital City-Amman
- Population of Capital City 1,275,857 (2018)
- Human Development Index Ranking 95
- Gross Domestic Product (per capita) \$4,247
- Unemployment Rate 18.3% (2017)
- Poverty Rate 13.3% (2018)
- Forest Area Rate 1.1%
- CO Emission (metric tons per capita) 3.00 (2017)

Laws and Regulations on Local Governments

With the founding of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the idea of local governance and a decentralized system was adopted. The Ottoman ordinance of 1877, which established town councils in significant agglomerations like as Salt, Ajloun, Karak, and Irbid, is the earliest municipal statute in Jordanian territory. Three bylaws—the governorates bylaw, the municipality bylaw, and the villages' management bylaw—make up the form and content of the laws pertaining to the Jordanian local administration system. However, the governorates are closer to the central system than the decentralized one because they are subsidiaries of the Ministry of the Interior. The Municipal Council was recognized as one of the local government bodies in Jordan under Law No. 29 of 1955, also known as the "Municipalities Act," which gave it the power to possession, lawsuit, and legal personality with financial independence. Later, in addition to several changes to elections and women's involvement, municipal law no. 13 of 2011 established the role of municipalities in development.

The Ministry of Interior was in charge of the legislation establishing the local decentralized administration, which was made public in 2014. In order to ensure a fair distribution of development returns, this act requires that the citizens be served by determining the goals of local communities through increased public engagement. Governors have the developmental authority to serve as the vice president of the Executive Council and the General Secretariat of the development units in the governorates, according to the draft article of the 2014 municipalities' law.

Based on the aforementioned, Jordan's local governance and decentralization system was developed with a forward-thinking vision and a mechanism of action based on the collaborative efforts of stakeholders from the public and private sectors to improve the quality of life for citizens on the one hand, and to create a national dialogue to come to a consensus on a shared vision for a decentralized system of administration and to research the fundamentals for creating a local development management strategy on the other.

The creation of integrated organizational structures, defining roles for the various levels of the institutions, holding regular local elections, identifying an appropriate financing system, and putting in place a financial supervision mechanism are the most notable pillars empowerment of the partnerships; development of the human resources technical support; and finally promoting the principles of accountability and equal opportunities.

Structure of Local Governments

Two sub-national system of local governance exist in Jordan: 1) the Governorate:

- Decentralized system of administration acting on behalf of the government; 2)
- The Municipality: a local institutional system composed of Municipalities (93) and Joint Service Councils (22). The first

system reflects the territorial division: the governorate (Muhafazah, 13), the District (Liwa, 51), the Sub-district (Cazas, 38) and the chief town.

- For the purposes of overall development, the kingdom was divided into 12

Governorates, distributed as follows:

- The northern governorates: (Irbid, Mafraq, Ajloun, Jerash), of which the population for 2013 has reached at (27.8%) of the total population of the Kingdom, constituting 32.6% of its total geographical area.
- The central governorates: (The capital, Balqa, Zarqa, Madaba), of which the population has reached (4.1022 million) at (62.8%) of the total population of the
- Kingdom, constituting (16.2%) of its total geographical area.
- The southern governorates: (Karak, Ma'an, Tafleh, Aqaba), of which the population has reached (612,500) at (9.4%) of the total population of the Kingdom, constituting (51.2%) of its total geographical area.

In terms of topography, climate, environment, population, natural resources, and its economic foundation, every governorate has unique features. This division was part of the government's plan to expand and enhance the urban centers scattered throughout each governorate in order to achieve urban, environmental, and developmental balance.

In the second system, four categories of municipalities exist:

- Center of the governorates and cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants;
- Centers of Districts and cities with population more than 15,000 inhabitants;
- Centers of Sub-districts and cities with population between 5,000 and 15,000;

All other municipalities below 5,000 inhabitants. However, and by recent law amendment, the government can subdivide the communal territories into zones or merge zones into one communal territory, motivated by a political demographic concern.

With regard, to the municipalities and since November 2011, Jordan now has 93 municipalities; some areas were favored, while others were not such as the peripheral municipalities; that's why there is a need for a decentralized system of service provision within municipalities. Hence, there are four categories of municipalities:

- Category 1: Those that are governorate centers (eleven plus the municipality of Greater Amman;
- Category 2: Those that are district centers or whose population exceeds 15,000 inhabitants;
- Category 3: the centers, or a population of between 5,000 and 15,000 and;
- Category 4: all other municipalities. Municipalities in the third and fourth categories saw their number reduced from 63% to 13% of municipalities in 2001, while the large municipalities in categories 1 and 2 went from 9.5% to 54.4% of the total. Between 2007 and 2011, the Municipality of Greater Amman doubled its area by integrating six municipalities to the south of its agglomeration.

From 1955 to 2001, Jordan had 'village councils' set up under Law No. 5 of 1954 to administer any tribal locality or village of less than 2,500 inhabitants.

They had very limited resources. The governor appointed the village council presidents and all their members (between three and eleven) and approved all their decisions.

The later layer of the local governance is the Municipal Joint Service Councils (JSC), they are municipal services that involve several municipalities and have been created by Regulation No. 17 of 1983, in accordance with Clause 41 of the Municipal Act of 1955. They allow several municipalities to manage together certain services, and in particular the collection of household waste, to make economies of scale. They were 44 in 2001, but their number was reduced to 21 after the merger process, but no dismissals were the employees were divided among the JSCs.

Central, Regional and Local Governments: Interrelations and Responsibilities

Local government system in Jordan is highly centralized; the central level consists of the King as the head of State and his Cabinet of Ministries led by an appointed Prime Minister. The Ministry of Interior (MoI) is the main authority responsible of the local governments in Jordan while the municipalities fall under the authority of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MoMA). The MoI supervises all the bodies, set plans and budgets and appoints governors, mayors and regional managers. The 70 Local Development Units (LDU) that used to be integrated to the governorate's department were assimilated with the Ministry of Interior, though canceling a good tool of planning at the governorate level and strengthening the centralization of the authorities.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MoMA), created in 1965, supervises all the municipalities as well as the Joint Services Council. This ministry appoints a local director at the municipal levels whose main task is to follow-up the day-to-day administrative work and municipality management along with the appointed Mayor; but, a prior approval is of this ministry is always required for any undertaken activity by the municipality. As mentioned before, the central government exercises high powers over the local authorities. It can appoint a manager or other persons over the elected municipal councilors to join the municipal council with the same power as the elected ones.

At the regional level, Jordan is composed of 12 governorates headed by a governor who acts as an extension of the central government and are accountable to it. Governorates are further subdivided into districts (Liwa') and Sub-districts (Qda'), they are directly under the directives of the Ministry of Interior and act locally as executive body on behalf on the Cabinet Ministers, whereas most of municipalities are under the directives of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. This allocation of executive power over the local government often creates conflict between the concerned ministries.

The local level consists of 93 municipalities and the Greater Amman Municipality, they have limited power vis-à-vis the central government and its regional managers. Municipalities in Jordan today are dispossessed of any sort of administrative or political autonomy, making it the most fragile element in this centralized political system. Thus the laws of 2007 and 2011 now assign 29 responsibilities, 26 of which are urban services that concern the daily life of the citizens.

Aqaba and Amman are described as "extra-territorial" zones. These two town are independent from the Ministry of municipality and do not follow administratively their governorates. In Aqaba, a city with 120 000 inhabitants, all the public services are under the Aqaba Special

Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA), the city is the sole port in Jordan and has a strategic location being on the frontiers of Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Israel, the government made from Aqaba a considerable pole of development both industrial and touristic. On the other hand, Amman is under the direct supervision of the Cabinet of Ministers. Another extra-territoriality zones are the Palestinian camps, which are under the directive of the UNERWA. Two councils assist the governor, they are as follows:

- The Executive Council: formed by the local managers of governmental ministries, especially those concerned with public services;
- The Advisory Council: composed of 15 appointed members by the Ministry of Interior on the recommendation of the governor; these members are local stakeholders from the civil society, trade unions, private sectors

The Executive Council (Majliss Tanfithi) has no real executive power when all the important decisions related to planning and budget are always set at the central level. It only follows up the work of the local ministerial departments (Mudiriya-s) coordinating their activities, programs and plans. While the Advisory Council (Majliss Ichтира'i), established in order to enhance local participation, has the lonely task to transmit propositions to the Executive Council. The latter can take these propositions, most of the time related to the annual budget, into consideration or not. What compromises also his role, the fact it is under the directives of the governor.

Mudiriya: is sectorial unit within the governorate administration. Each Mudiriya is concerned with one aspect of public service and under the authority of the concerned ministry.

Consequently, the central government can appoint a manager over the City council whose prerogatives can exceed those of the mayor. Mainly, he can assist, without having a voting right, all the sessions of the municipal council, prepare the agenda and take part of deliberations. Also, he can execute the decisions of this council, prepare the annual budget and present it to the president as well as collecting and monitoring the municipal revenues.

As for municipalities, they are described as a "civil institution" and are managed by a municipal council composed of a president and council's members; they are the weakest circle in the politico-administrative system. The law attributes to them responsibilities in domains such as: urban planning, construction, maintenance of water and sewers networks, electricity, markets and shops, transport, public squares, firefighting, disaster prevention and relief, public health, sports and cultural institutions, public security, publicity in public space, etc.

Finally, the Joint Service Council is a structure created to deliver public services for a group of municipalities and villages in order to achieve economies of scale, especially in the solid waste collection. Also this kind of structure exists for zones with specific administration like the Petra Region, the industrial zone, and special economic zone like Aqaba. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs decides, and with the recommendation of the governor, to form these councils. It can also dissolve this council or omit certain municipality from it. They enjoy a legal personality like the municipalities with regard to common services and projects. After the 2002 fusion, 99 Municipalities and 22 Joint Services Councils exist, the operation went without any redundancy and the numbers of employees were kept the same. However, in 2007, Amman joined 6

municipalities to its jurisdiction, decreasing the total number of municipalities to 93.

The Municipal Council is the main elected body headed by the Mayor. The government, according to the size of the municipalities, fixes the members of the municipal council. There are between 6 and 11 councilors, having an administrative and supervising role that are assigned to them. The 2007 municipal law amendments gave Amman, the capital, a special status. The council oversees the municipality departments and staff to ensure the appropriate implementation of the responsibilities attributed to them by law. The council members have a general local development mandate in addition to the 39 functions assigned to them by law, e.g. cleaning, street lighting, construction and maintenance of roads, markets, public parks, libraries and town planning. The other members who are appointed from the central government (manager or two councilors) can act as the elected ones with even an extended power over the council or the Mayor.

Relations between Central Government and Local Governments

The lack of power is considered to be one of the challenges municipalities face as a result of the centralized political system. The role of the City Council and the Mayor remains open to intervention from the central administration especially on the ministerial level. The governor, an appointed figure by the Ministry of Interior, can run all the affairs of the mayor without even consulting with him. Additionally, mayors need an approval from the governor for any activity they wish to organize within its jurisdiction. Municipalities are not involved or consulted by the agencies providing the services in urban areas, in particular water and electricity. Furthermore, the Council of Ministers has the power to modify any municipal council's boundary, merging or dividing municipalities, also the Council can fix the date of the municipal elections and set the limits and the number of the elected representatives.

According to the laws, municipalities should function autonomously collecting their taxes and managing their services. But they were gradually placed under the control of the government that must approve all their projects and all their expenses. This loss of autonomy was justified by the financial crisis and lack of qualified staff. What is more, is the absence of participatory local governance or forms of dialogue between the population and the local authorities, because, very few municipalities inform their population with upcoming projects through public meeting or newsletters. In 2009, the Minister of Planning launched, with the UNDP consultation, a decentralization operation, giving more role to municipalities in developing and planning their localities.

Local Elections and Mayors

At the governorate level there are no elections, the King under the recommendation of the Prime Minister appoints the governors. They are directly related to the Minister of Interior who appoints most of the governorate's main staff and determines the governorate budget. The members of the two councils assisting the governor, the executive and the advisory council are directly appointed from the Minister of Interior.

At the municipal level and since 1989, every legislative or municipal election has been accompanied by a reform of the electoral law, the aim of which is first to guarantee tribal legislative assemblies and then to limit the rise of the Islamist opposition, in

particular, after the 1999 winning elections the Islamic Action Front called at the boycott of the municipal elections of 2003, 2007 and 2013.

According to the law, the mayor and the members of the municipal council are directly elected by universal votequadrennially. The members of the municipal council are fixed by the government according to the size of the municipalities, they are between 6 and 11, in addition to the mayor. It is under the prerogatives of the Minister of Municipalities to postpone the elections or to dissolve the municipal councils (like on 1 March 2011) for an indeterminate period of up to two years.

The inhabitants elected their municipal councilors, who then voted to appoint the mayor. This process lasted from 1955 to 1995. It was only in 1982 that a new municipal law gave women the right to vote and stand for municipal elections and the age was reduced from 21 to 19 for all citizens (not only males) that could vote and be elected. In 1994, an amendment to the municipal law was promulgated according to which voters can directly elect mayors, except for Amman. The age was lowered to 18 years, widening the electoral base. In 1999, after the Victory of the Islamists in the municipal elections of Irbid, Zarqa,

Russeifa and Tafla, a new municipal law was promulgated in 2001 by which the king designated the mayors of all the cities as well as half of the members of the municipal councils. An amendment to the electoral law for municipalities in 2007 established a quota of 20% of the seats for women, finally present in numbers on the councils. For the elections of August 27, 2013, this quota was raised to 25% of the seats (amendment to the law of the municipalities of 2011). Moreover, all the mayors and municipal councils are elected by direct suffrage, except for the municipality of Greater Amman whose mayor and 1/3 of the councilors are appointed by the Council of Ministers; besides, the Minister of Municipal Affairs may, with the approval of the Council of Ministers, also appoints two members to each municipal council that have the same elected members' rights.

Municipal elections that were supposed to be held in 2011 were adjourned to 27 August 2013, with the beginning of the incidents in some Arab countries, all elected mayors were thanked and mayors designated by the Council of Ministers were chosen. The new municipal elections were supposed to be held by the time that this report was in preparation in August 2017.

Despite the recent legislative amendments to foster public participation and develop local governance by reinforcing governors' authorities, their capacities remain constraint by the central government decisions. Governors 'coordinate' the work of governmental departments and public services in the Governorates. They have responsibility for approving the budget of 93 municipalities, except for Amman (which falls directly under the jurisdiction of the Prime Minister). Despite, Governors have very little autonomy and cannot set taxes or spend budget, they can only make decisions on projects of less than JOD 100,000 (US\$).

The Governor, for his part, is an employee of the Ministry of Interior, such as the executive authority and the head of public administration in his governorate. He is appointed by the Council of Ministers in accordance with a proposal of the Minister of Interior, at the end, Royal Decree shall accompany the decision. The main tasks of the governor are as follow:

- Leads the official institutions within the governorate and supervise their performance;
- Coordinates between the governorate, municipalities as well as the ministries and other public institutions;
- Supervises the development plans and the preparation of the governorate budget;
- Sets priorities and proposes projects;
- Approves the budget of the municipalities;

Supervise the work of the Governorate's Development Units GDU since 2008. Jordanian Municipalities represent a partially devolved component of a wider local governance system involving vertically de-concentrated line ministries. There is a big gap between the wide functions and responsibilities that the Law assigns to them and authorizes them to exert, on the one hand, and the extremely limited number of services that they provide and functions, which they assume, on the other. Except for Amman and Aqaba, the mandate of the elected municipal councilors is four years. This also applies to the councils,

Executive and Advisory, at the governorate level

The JSCs are mandated to carry out for several municipalities the construction of public and service buildings and schools, but as for the municipalities, their prerogatives were provided by the concerned ministries, for example, the Ministry of public works and Housing for Buildings or the Ministry of Education for Schools.

Strategic Planning and Performance Assessment

Adopting specific urban development techniques was one of the main objectives outlined by the Jordanian government. This is demonstrated by the establishment of profitable projects in the state's current or future urban centers, which boosts the economy. In accordance with predetermined executive initiatives, it is also essential to improve the standard of living by deploying developmental projects, offering employment chances, and modernizing metropolitan areas' infrastructure. Enhancing the services offered in the fields of education, health, culture, tourism, and social services are additional tactics that guarantee the sustained growth of both urban and rural communities.

Local Development Directives LDD of the Ministry of Interior and Local Development Unit LDU at the Governorate level are two bodies of planning. Since 2010, the LDU and the LDD were merged under the directive of the Ministry of Interior. Since 2009 the Jordanian administration was so inspired, in term of Planning, by the development ideology promoted by the World Bank, emphasizing the importance of a participatory planning implicating the most vulnerable population. This procedure enabled the population of the informal zones to get out from their informality by giving facilities into accessing into ownership.

Today, LDUs continue to operate within a de-concentrated system, they have in theory assumed a position where they can play a major role in the preparation of local development strategies, and local development action plans for their respective Governorates. The reality is that their primary focus was on reporting to the centre on the implementation of projects by other government authorities.

Duties and Responsibilities of Local Governments

The function of most of the municipalities is reduced to maintenance, monitor and supply of part of the basic services. The

last amendments to the local government law, delegated a lot of the municipal prerogatives to the central government (13 from 39), including cultural development, water, electricity, sewage, freighting, health, education, sports, local transportation, etc. Adding to that, the central government is encouraging the privatization of main local services which threaten the existential purpose of municipalities.

Social Duties and Responsibilities

With regard to infrastructure, the main responsibilities of the local authorities are limited to maintenance operations such as pavements and street lighting plus cleaning the streets and collecting waste where the Joint Service Council is not operative. The spending percentage of government on infrastructure in 2012 is lower than in 2011, The data indicates that the percentage of households connected with water, electricity, and sanitary services at the local level is about 96.7%, 99.9%, and 59.7 %, respectively, during 2012.

For the municipalities where a Joint Service Council is operative, the later manages the solid waste collection overseen by governorate Executive Council.

The Ministry of Environment is the central authority responsible over the solid waste management; it is responsible for the selection and the safety of the dumpsites. Concerning the roads construction and maintenance, the municipal law precise that road planning is one of its first prerogatives, but the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MoMA) often completes this task.

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The bottlenecks of infrastructure planning and sustainable infrastructure operation are diverse and can be clustered in:

- Lack of clear sharing out of responsibilities and funds for urban planning at responsible administrative levels and among concerned authorities (municipalities, governorates, ministries).
- Uncontrolled and unplanned horizontal and vertical expansion of residential areas often distant to public infrastructure due to lack of control.
- External population growth (displaced persons) which results in new residential areas beyond the national planning frame (refugee camps).

In order to meet the challenges, the Jordanian government is seeking to amend the relevant legislation with regard to housing provision system, the government continues to implement institutional and financial reforms to mobilize the financial resources and to enhance the equal competition in the housing finance market system. Additionally, it covers infrastructure, building services, and land restrictions, all of which have an effect on housing costs and, thus, present a chance for housing finance. The restructuring program makes it possible for the regulated private sector to become a direct product for the populace in accordance with government regulations and the recommendations of the national housing policy.

Therefore, through the General Housing and Urban Development Corporation, the government's involvement is restricted to supporting and coordinating the housing industry in the Kingdom in the following areas:

- Enabling the private sector to play a part in housing all demographics, including those with low incomes. In Jordan, the private sector accounts for 88% of the overall housing output, which satisfies 90% of housing demand. In order to supply land plots appropriate for the construction of residential units, numerous agreements between the public and private sectors have been struck.
- Overcoming obstacles that prevent the supply of land appropriate for all segments. The organization and land use comprehensive planning has been approved.
- Modifying residential leasing laws to promote the private sector's construction of rental housing and to establish a fair and equitable interaction between landlords and tenants.
- Providing residential programs to meet demand of housing for poor families.

Unlike European cities, municipalities in Jordan do not have significant contributions to the cultural life of their citizens, culture is considered as part of the central government occupations, thus most of the cultural activities in cities are implemented by the Ministry of Culture through its regional directorates. In Greater Amman, the creation of the cultural department and centers at the municipal level and the issuance of cultural magazines had contributed to the enhancement of the national and local culture during the last decade. By supporting cultural activities, municipalities must allocate the required financial resources aiming to play a vital role in evolving the cultural infrastructure within the cities and to carve up the citizens' needs. This accomplishment would have created solid foundations for the development of the Jordanian society. For the time being, culture do not fall among the top municipal priorities due to the constant shortage in urban service provision, so some of the budget items that belong to the culture would be derived to other items like infrastructure.

Archeological sites are normally managed by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA) along with the Department of Antiquities (DoA). However, there was significant landscape damage surrounding these important sites as a result of the central authorities' lack of collaboration with the local government authorities involved in urban planning, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, and local municipalities. Consequently, a national committee was established by the central government to safeguard the architectural and urban heritage. This committee, which was established by MMA members, local governments, and ministries including the DoA, MoTA, and MoE, organizes urban planning to ensure buffer zones surrounding heritage monuments while also involving local authorities in heritage conservation. A number of international accords pertaining to the advancement of women's and human rights have been ratified by Jordan. In addition to the release of the national policy for individuals with disabilities for the years 2010–2015, the Higher Council for Disability was established in 2007. The public sector is expected to play a significant role in development by investing local resources and organizing institutions and the populace in light of the social and economic vulnerability position. In terms of developing the policies, laws, and infrastructure to offer various services for their support and

community integration, it is also expected to offer social and health care services for the elderly and those with disabilities. In the other hand, the 2011 municipal law raised the percentage of women in municipal councils from 20% to 25%. Currently, women constitute 35.9% of the members of municipal councils in 2013. Therefore, the municipalities according to the level of legislature in the country should be implicated in fighting poverty and providing adequate social services for the population. The local associations which also deliver in some cities basic social services leading the population to question even the role of the municipal council challenge this.

Financial Duties and Responsibilities

At the local level, this topic is crucial since it helps close the gaps between urban areas and ensures that financial resources are used efficiently while working with local authorities. Duty-free zones were created strategically and to promote economic growth by bringing together labor, infrastructure, services, and location in one area, as well as by offering improved access to regional and international markets (see section 3.7 for specifics).

Additionally, the "Green Building Manual," a component of sustainable design, will lower water and energy usage, saving significant amounts of money that may be used for various initiatives and activities that improve the standard of living for Jordanian city dwellers. Jordan's National Agenda 2006-2015 cites "environmentally sustainable economic development" as a priority, while its National Energy Strategy of 2007-2020 targets an energy mix of 10% renewable energy by 2020. In December 2014 and January 2015, Jordan gave licenses to build nine solar-run power plants in the Ma'an and Mafrqa governorates. Two wind energy projects are planned for 2015. The projects help reach the goal of having several renewable energy projects with a total capacity of 1,800 megawatts by the end of 2018.

Municipalities formed local development units, and laws defining their responsibilities and guaranteeing their authorities in choosing and carrying out priority projects in their communities have been modified. The provinces established local development units and provided them with the staff and tools they needed to oversee the execution of capital projects. Following the 2001 law modification, governors were given additional economic authority and were tasked with overseeing the growth of the economy inside their borders and creating an atmosphere that was favorable to investment.

In order to provide appropriate services for the population, it is essential for the municipalities to have available resources to achieve their goals. Despite that, the Jordanian municipalities are dependent on the government aid constituting up to 40% of their revenue. Less than half of municipal budget is collected by municipalities (43% in 2004).

1. The first source of municipal revenue, counting for more than half of the budget (57% in 2004), is state transfers which are derived from an 8% tax on refined petroleum products and 40% tax on the sale of vehicles and traffic violations. For years, these transfers were made according to a 'transfer formula' that included the number of inhabitants, the category of the municipality (from 1 to 4) and the level of its needs.
2. The second is a series of taxes on property, building permits and leases commercial. Only the three largest municipalities (Amman, Zarqa and Irbid) collect these taxes themselves; the others have delegated this task to

the Ministry of Finance, which pays them with a discount of 10%. The country is divided into five zones and for each one, the government set average prices. This tax represents between 10% and 12% of municipal revenues (8% in 2004), but it is under-collected. It should also be revised every five years.

3. Finally, municipalities could borrow from the Cities and Villages Development Bank (CVDB), a government bank administered by the Minister of Municipalities. These borrowings, attained 14%, are calculated depending on the size of the municipalities, their administrative rank and Most of the Jordanian municipalities are in deficit. Salaries are the important element in the expenditures, 55% of the total budget, reaching 84% for Ruseifa,

Zarqa, Mafrqa and the municipalities of southern Amman. Moreover, the operation of infrastructure takes an important part of the expenditures of certain municipalities like the transport infrastructure serving Iraq and Syria in Mafrqa or the construction of the airport in Marj al Hammam, or garbage collection a very expensive item, pavement, lighting, maintenance of gardens and squares, markets, building permits and public hygiene.

Environmental Duties and Responsibilities

Jordan's environmental challenges, high rates of population, rapid and poorly planned urbanization, and heavy dependence on imported energy resources combine to create socio-economic and environmental pressures likely to dominate Jordan's development processes for years to come. The scarcity of natural resources is coupled with the vulnerability of ecosystems and habitats that permit special conservation, including through sustainable development efforts. Climate change will affect Jordan through higher temperatures, shorter wet seasons, more erratic rain and rising sea levels. The environmental law no. 52 of 2006 approached the protection of the environment together with the human health against pollution through the introduction of policies and projects as well as regulations and instructions complying with standard specifications aiming to reduce environmental pollution.

Climate Change

Climate change adaptation is becoming a need and a way of life rather than an option. Given the expanding population in Jordan and the surrounding area, this may be more significant. Jordan, like many developing nations, has started to experience the negative effects of climate change, such as rising temperatures, an increase in areas affected by drought, unpredictable rainfall, heat waves, and a significant decline in surface and subsurface water supplies, which could lead to a food shortage. Furthermore, there is an effect on illness patterns. Having access to sanitary facilities and clean water, which leads to population displacement from the most impacted areas while jeopardizing the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

It is obvious that Jordanian cities suffer from inadequate urban planning, which now needs to take climate change into account. Additionally, it appears that there are many chaotic land use patterns, which significantly affects the environmental sector. The concentration of industrial zones in urban areas and human settlements like Amman, Zarqa, Aqaba, and Irbid, as well as the detrimental effects of interactions between these industries, urban centers, and environmental resources like soil, groundwater, unlicensed waste spoils, and excessive urban expansion, are some

of the most significant manifestations of poor land planning. This has a disastrous effect on rising air pollution, particularly when it comes to greenhouse gasses that are mostly produced by automobile emissions.

At the institutional level, the Ministry of Environment is reconsidering its organizational structure to introduce the directorate of climate change. This directorate will function as a specialist unit focused on the green economy. The transition to a green economy, green cities, and green buildings will aid in addressing the challenges posed by climate change. The MoE, which issued a set of environmental legislation, is currently reviewing the Environmental Protection law in effect to introduce new articles related to addressing climate change. Many present techniques, like "green city," "green building," and "green transportation," need to be "greened" in order to support such a shift. According to Jordan's Second National Communication Report to the UNFCCC, the main contributing sectors of Greenhouse Gas Emissions to the atmosphere were: energy, including transport (74 %), wastes (13.5 %), industrial processes (7.9 %), land use change, forestry (3.7 %) and agriculture (0.9%).

Climate change projections show an increase in temperatures of less than 2C by the year 2050, which could contribute to extreme weather patterns such as floods and droughts, the most critical climate change impact could occur with the temperature rising by more than 2% without a precipitation increase. According to climate models, even a 20% increase in precipitation will not compensate for the temperature increase which will affect agriculture, food security and water management.

Water

One of the worst environmental hazards facing the nation, which jeopardizes its growth, is the lack of water (Jordan is one of the five poorest countries in the world). Jordan's groundwater and surface water are mostly supplied by rainfall. Per capita water consumption was 147 liters per day in 2004, according to the General Census of Population and Housing, and fell to 89 liters per day in 2013. The Zaatari refugee camp, which houses barely 15% of all Syrian refugees, uses more than a million gallons of water every day, adding to the strain caused by the refugee crisis.

In the field of secure water, the monitoring programs has covered 100% of the specification requirements, for drinking water, as has been covered 100% of the chemical tests required in the specifications of Jordan standard for drinking water No. 286 of 2013. Through the implementation of numerous projects to reduce water loss and restore water systems around the Kingdom, Jordan continues to increase the efficiency of water supply and distribution systems for residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural uses. The completion rates of these projects, which aim to improve water networks in the Zarqa Governorate and Al-Rusaifa province and minimize waste in the Irbid and Karak governorates, range from 40% to 75%. By implementing these projects, the percentage of networks wasted decreased from 43.9% in 2008 to 42.0% in 2011.

Additional strategic initiatives include the Disi reservoir water conveyance project, which was started in 2010 in collaboration with the private sector to secure 100 million cubic liters of drinkable water. The project's goal is to distribute water via pipelines to every governorate in the Kingdom. Conversely, the construction of a desalination plant in the Aqaba Governorate is part of the first phase

of the Red Sea/Dead Sea water transporter project, which aims to desalinate 85–100 million cubic meters annually.

The City of Amman receive its water requirements from several sources, it is consisted of 24% of local resources, 35% from the Jordan Valley, 31% from Madaba and Karak, 6% from Zarqa. It takes 15% of all electricity generated in Jordan to pump such amounts of water from low elevations. The huge cost and effort is also subject to about 45% of non-accounted for water lost to leakages in the pipe system or through illegal pumping from wells.

Waste Water

Jordan is always working to extend sewer service to all of the Kingdom's towns, as well as to villages and communities. The waste water infrastructure and projects falls under the duty of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, it oversees the projects' phases from studies to implementation. The ministry is responsible for the:

- Construction of water treatment plants to increase the capacity and process the wastewater to be reused in irrigation and industry.
- Construction of drainage systems and building treatment plants, sewage water with the latest international standards and specifications to ensure sustainable access to sanitation services.
- Enhancing the participation of private sector in the management of water services and sanitation.

A decentralized method to wastewater management is generally most appropriate for suburban and rural communities, particularly toward the upper edge of catchments, where the costs of wastewater pumping over long distances to large centralized treatments plants outweigh the plant's potential economies of scale. Hence decentralized and centralized wastewater management approaches are complementary to each other.

Other Duties and Responsibilities

The creation of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MoMA), Municipalities, Amman Greater Municipality, Aqaba Regional Authority, Petra Regional Authority, and the Development Zones Commission demonstrated Jordan's support for the urban development concept. While the ministry is in charge of creating detailed structural plans for all of the kingdom's municipalities, helping to support and develop population clusters that municipal councils are unable to, and overseeing the financial transfer of funds, these departments were tasked with carrying out plans, programs, and development projects within their districts.

The planning process in Jordan is highly centralized. Although the law specifically allows municipalities to execute and apply city planning and manage urban areas, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs has already developed inclusive schemes for all of them, as it is the most competent authority in this field while municipalities usually do not have this capability. Nevertheless, the main problem areas due to planning irresponsible of local conditions can be

Classified into four categories:

- Provision of infrastructure and basic services.
- Pollution resulting from urban wastes and emissions.
- Deterioration of resources.
- Creation of environmental hazards.

There is an urgent need to move away from centralized planning system to link physical planning with infrastructure planning that involves committees at the municipal level with representatives of the relevant authorities for planning.

From a strategic viewpoint, duty free zones were developed to facilitate investments by combining the location, infrastructure, services and labor in the same zone, and providing better access to regional and global markets, e.g. Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZA), Ma'an development zone, Irbid development zone, the Dead Sea development zone, and others. The "Green

Building Manual" was another element of a sustainable design and was approved by the Jordanian building council in 2013. This document defines the technical measures to meet the requirements of sustainability in the buildings to reduce energy and water consumption, in addition to the reduction of the consumption of materials during and after construction, promote recycling, and mitigate the environmental impact of buildings on the surrounding environment.

As mentioned before, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MoMA), is the main authority of urban planning. According to this Law, there are three planning committees at different level of administration: the Local Planning Committee, the District Planning Committee and the Central City and Village Planning Development CCVPD within the MoMA. Two kind of plans exist: Regional Plan and the Master Plan. Regional Plan is prepared by the Central Planning department in MoMA and defines, among others, the location of new cities and villages, land use, private/public areas, protected areas and the transportation system. Master Plan is prepared by the district local committee and defines existing and new roads; water supply and drainage infrastructure; land use; building regulation, public service areas and special service areas.

At the municipal level, Physical planning is undertaken following the Law of Planning of Cities, villages and Building No 79 of 1996. Hence, municipal councils were given limited responsibility in this regard. Planning decisions are presented through committees for public comment as a legal duty rather than an effective attempt made by the municipal council to identify the priorities and requirements of the residents. The Municipal council should prepare the Master Plan to be approved later by the High Council of Planning (Majlis Al Tanzim Al-A'la), but because of lack of qualified employees on the local level, the

Master Plan preparation procedure is reversed, prepared by the High Council of Planning and approved by the City Council with very limited power to edit it or to add any modifications. Nevertheless, Amman's Master Plan, which was initiated in 2006, aimed at preparing a serious and comprehensive city planning scheme, it has taken a new shape as The Metropolis 2025 model. This model was In the past decades, the degradation of the public transportation quality and services have led to more dependence on private vehicles and though to an increase in their numbers 70 cars/1000 inhabitants in Amman). On the central level, the Ministry of Transportation is currently developing a new strategy for transportation that aims to trace long-term plan that expands to 2030, and to arrange for a program of performance's evaluation and monitoring besides setting the priorities for investments. In 2014, the Ministry of Transport, which is the body responsible for planning and drafting laws related to the transportation sector in Jordan, has elaborated a comprehensive scheme at the national level aiming to:

- Introduce unconventional transportation means,
- Establish the needed infrastructure projects,
- Identify the best practices for the management, operation and ownership of public passenger transportation, and
- Develop the most appropriate mechanisms to encourage investment and partnership with the private sector.

In the coming decade, it is expected that the number of licensed vehicles will reach 2 million in Amman following the figures on private cars ownership. This fact will add more pressure on infrastructure and environment. To this end, a sustainable transportation policy will reduce the reliance on private vehicles by including a combination of integrated uses and public transportation systems.

The Amman Greater Municipality has a leading experience with its strategic scheme for transportation and traffic, which prioritizes public transportation as the spine of the traffic system in the city, and increase the use of public transportation from (14%) to (40%). Another important project is the creation of Amman Development passageway which is an eastern extension of the Amman through a deliberate planning process, contributing to mitigate traffic congestions by providing alternative roads away from the city center, and open new locations for agricultural or industrial or new housing areas, especially for people with limited income.

There are 4 types of public transport in Amman: bus, minibus, taxi and service taxi, all these modes are structured by the "Public Transport Regulatory Commission" (PTRC) in Amman and throughout Jordan. Taxis cover all destinations in Amman, but service taxis, minibuses and buses are restricted specific routes.

Buses: They are run by franchised companies, which are contracted to operate new routes or to increase the capacity on existing routes. All franchisees pay an annual franchise fee to the PTRC or to the Ministry of Finance according to the date of their contract.

Minibuses: Offer more flexibility than buses and complement their network. Franchising of minibuses is under the responsibility of the PTRC and follow the same procedures as buses. It is the intention of the PTRC to progressively replace minibuses with buses.

Service taxi: they are public vehicles that could be shared by 4 to 6 passengers according to their type and size. They do not depart from terminal stations until they are full, but they are quicker than buses and minibuses since they stop less often to drop off and pick up passengers.

Taxi: Taxis cover all destinations in Amman; they are not restricted to specific routes like service taxis, minibuses or buses.

There are 10 terminal stations in Amman owned by Amman Governorate and managed by franchised companies. Each vehicle using the terminal station is required to pay a monthly fee to the management company. They are start-end of lines for buses, minibuses and service taxis. Only buses of major companies have predefined departure times, minibuses and service taxis normally only leave when full, so waiting is sometimes required.

Challenges and Opportunities of Local Governments

Internal Capacity, Urban Service Delivery and Reforms
Jordanian municipalities have the paradox of having rights and
Vol-2, Iss-10 (October-2025)

important responsibilities under the successive laws, but gradually they have been dispossessed of their power because, according to the government, they have neither the capacity nor the roles to assume their responsibilities due to their weak technical capacities to provide the appropriate services to the citizens. Most of urban services are ill-assured; cities are developing chaotically, old cities are unprotected, circulation uncontrolled, and so on.

The law granted municipalities lots of prerogatives that covered the entire daily life of citizens. However, it does not reflect the evolution of urban roles nor the functions and capacities that the municipalities assume these days. Apart urban planning, which is carried out by the Ministry of Municipalities, most of urban services are performed by urban delegates to other ministries or private companies; thus the Ministry of Water and Irrigation manages water and sewers; Electricity is supplied by the Jordanian Electricity Authority that can install power plants without prior permission of the municipalities; construction and management schools are provided by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and medical centers and hospitals; of buildings by the Department of Public Works; Bus networks are managed by the Ministry of Transport; And the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities arranges tourist sites and collects entrance fees.

Sustainable Urban Development

Urban Risks and Resilience

Jordan has invested substantial resources on infrastructure and service facilities to serve the citizens which made outstanding achievements and maintain stability. These achievements were accompanied by challenges that are still unresolved; mainly there is a development gap between governorates plus the high unemployment rates.

A major challenge in Jordan lies in urban sprawl that resulted in costly demand for water supply infrastructures. In this context, there is a clear need for more compact Jordanian cities, rather than low-density urban areas, to reduce per capita urban expenditures on services delivery. Following the sustainable urban planning approach will be an instrument to achieve a balance and integration in all urban sectors in order to boost the Jordanian cities to compete with each other's.

Another development challenge comes from the high annual growth rates of energy demand: 4-5% for primary energy and 5.3% for demand for electricity, for the period 2015-2025, which remains one of the highest in the world. The high cost of importing energy puts a heavy burden on the public budget already.

The transport sector is the second source of greenhouse gases of Jordan with 16%. The Ministry of Transport has a long term strategy to increase the total number of commuters using public transportation, MoT believes that introducing higher order public transit systems such as bus rapid transit (BRT) systems is key to improving the transport service in the country. The Ministry is already taking on the Zarqa- Amman project that would link to the Amman BRT system that is constrained by running costs. To achieve this objective, the government launched a strategy entitled "Updated Master Strategy of Energy Sector in Jordan" for the period 2007-2020 to secure reliable energy supply, to develop renewable energy projects, and to promote energy conservation and energy efficiency and awareness being implemented. Initial steps are being taken to tackle other probable viable routes including Salt- Sweileh-

Baqaa. Furthermore, the country has adopted renewable energy laws and policies designed to attract investment in the area.

In 2015, Jordan gave licenses to build nine solar-run power plants in the Ma'an and Mafraq governorates. Two wind energy projects are planned for 2015. The projects help reach the goal of having several renewable energy projects with a total capacity of 1,800 megawatts by the end of 2018.

By its geographical location, Jordan is prone to many risks such as earthquakes, floods, droughts, the risk of severe weather conditions (Freezes). The scale and impact of any disaster depends upon the level of preparedness of governments and community groups to:

- Understand the risk factors and relevant mitigation approaches;
- Monitor the situation to predict the potential imminence of hazards; and
- Institute timely preventive measures to guard against hazards turning into disasters.

Responsibilities for disaster management and mitigation in Jordan are widespread among many ministries and government agencies. What is missing is a comprehensive national level multi-sectorial plan, which incorporates the city and the governorate levels from technical and operational aspects and people centered approaches by encouraging civil society involvement.

The Supreme Council of Civil Defense was created by royal decree to be the body with the authority to conduct all acts and measures pertaining to handling emergencies, and the Hashemite government has made every effort to safeguard the citizens in this regard. In addition to overseeing their execution, the Council will be in charge of formulating the general civil defense policy, approving the comprehensive plans required in emergency and disaster situations, and identifying the roles and responsibilities of each official or civic organization. The Council gives the required directives to coordinate the activities of the governorates and districts' civil defense bases. In order to support civil defense, it also establishes and equips public shelters throughout the Kingdom, identifies the roles and responsibilities of the civil defense committees established in the several governorates, and specifies the military forces' and public security's responsibilities in emergency and catastrophe circumstances. Additionally, the Council will supervise the establishment of volunteer teams of civilians to aid in civil defense and provide information on how to alert the public to emergencies and disasters. Although Amman's agencies have a networking system in place, interagency cooperation has to be strengthened by the Amman Municipality's creation of a cooperation Unit. Based on Jordan's first seismic risk assessment and analysis, a Disaster Risk Management Master Plan (DRMMP) for Earthquake Risk Reduction was also created for the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) in 2009. Following the completion of a social vulnerability, social impact, and seismic risk assessment, a second plan was created for Aqaba. Determining the behavioral patterns and vulnerabilities of communities and subgroups, including women, children, youth, the disabled, and the elderly, is therefore a crucial part of the preparedness strategy.

External and Internal Migration

The conflict in Syria has led to the largest crisis in our time, with human and economic costs in addition to their bad

consequences on host countries and host communities. Jordan faces exacerbating factors resulting from the increase of Syrian refugees, who comprise nearly 13% of Jordan's 6.388 million population almost 1.5 million. Most of these refugees have settled in host communities in urban areas in Amman and the northern governorates of the country, the remaining are hosted in refugee camps. They live in precarious circumstances, apart from the generosity of hosting governments, on the margins of peri-urban areas and face limited access to public services due to unprecedented demand.

The refugees in Jordan, whom are living below the country's poverty line, put pressure on public services and already stressed water, energy resources and infrastructure as well as on the education sector. Since 2011, fuel, electricity and water use has risen sharply as for the subsidy bills for the government.

State schools run double shift to cope with the increase in their electricity and water bills for the Ministry of Education. Prior to that, Jordan municipalities were already struggling to provide services for the population and maintain an economic and social cohesion within communities. This situation has also affected the middle income Jordanian due to the inflation and the shortage in housing and employment.

Solid Waste Management (SWM) is a particular concern; the influx of refugees means in principle an increase of an estimated 340 tons of waste to dispose of daily. Prior to the crisis, SWM capacity


was in many respects already exceeded, logistical means were outdated and insufficient, financial means overwhelmed by increasing fuel cost, and technical and institutional processes inefficient and environmentally not sustainable. A number of other municipal services and planning functions are impacted directly by the crisis notably: Urban management capacity, road degradation as a result of heavy transport, overutilization of public spaces and parks as transit areas for refugees, inadequate housing solutions, and poor water and sanitation conditions as a result of inadequate infrastructure.

The World Bank Group works in close collaboration with UNHCR to provide the practical advice and support to turn a humanitarian crisis into a development opportunity, thus broadening the focus of mitigating the refugee crisis from assistance to economic inclusion, working towards a more stable, prosperous future for all. Between 2015-2017, the program of UN-Habitat focus to work with central and local government to support them and to strengthen all aspects of governance and management in urban areas through:

- Effective urbanization, urban planning, and local governance;
- Improved land management and administration;
- Increased emphasis on pro-poor housing;
- Improved infrastructure and basic services; and
- Strengthened Jordanian resilience in urban protracted crisis

Local Government System Of Administration In Saudi Arabia:

SAUDI ARABIA

Capital and largest city	Riyadh  24°39'N 46°46'E
Official languages	Arabic
Ethnic groups (2014)	90% Arab 10% Afro-Arab (for Saudi citizens only)
Religion (2010)	93.0% Islam (official) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 85— 90% Sunni ▪ 10— 15% Shia 4.4% Christianity 1.1% Hinduism 0.7% unaffiliated 0.3% Buddhism
Demonym(s)	Saudi Saudi Arabian
Government	Unitary Islamic absolute monarchy
King	Salman
Crown Prince and Prime Minister	Mohammed
Legislature	none
Establishment	
Emirate of Diriyah	1727
Emirate of Nejd	1824
Emirate of Riyadh	13 January 1902

Unification	23 September 1932
Admitted to the United Nations	24 October 1945
Current constitution	31 January 1992
Area	
Total	2,149,690km ² (830,000 sq mi) (12th)
Water (%)	0.7
Population	
2022 census	▲ 32,175,224 (46th)
Density	15/km ² (38.8/sq mi) (174th)
GDP (PPP)	2024 estimate
Total	▲ \$2.354 trillion (17th)
Per capita	▲ \$70,333 (15th)
GDP (nominal)	2024 estimate
Total	▲ \$1.106 trillion (19th)
Per capita	▲ \$33,040 (34th)
Gini (2013)	— 45.9 medium
HDI (2022)	▲ 0.875 very high (40th)
Currency	Saudi riyal (SR) (SAR)
Time zone	UTC+3 (AST)
Date format	dd/mm/yyyy (AH)
Driving side	right
Calling code	+966
ISO 3166 code	SA

The Saud dynasty (Āl Saʿūd), which rules Saudi Arabia as a monarchy, gained its position through its close affiliation with and backing of the Wahhābī religious institution. Although Islamic law, or Shariʿah, is the main source of legislation, more commonplace factors like political expediency, the inner politics of the ruling family, and the influence of intertribal politics—all of which are still very much present in the modern kingdom—often undermine the actual promulgation of legislation and the implementation of policies.

The kingdom has never had a written constitution, although in 1992 the king issued a document known as the Basic Law of Government (Al-Nizām al-Asāsī li al-Hukm), which provides guidelines for how the government is to be run and sets forth the rights and responsibilities of citizens. The king performs a combination of judicial, executive, and legislative duties. Traditionally, he has assumed the position of prime minister, which oversees the Council of Ministers (Majlis al-Wuzarāʾ). Through a number of independent organizations, the council oversees executive and administrative affairs, including defense, foreign and domestic policy, finance, health, and education. The king has the authority to appoint people to and remove people from the council. The Consultative Council (Majlis al-Shūrā), a new quasi-legislative body with a large number of technical experts, was established in 1993 thanks to the Basic Law of Government. The king appoints all of its members. Together with the Council of Ministers, the Consultative Council can develop laws and present them to the king for ratification.

All significant policy decisions are ultimately decided outside of these official structures, though. The royal family, which includes the many descendants of the kingdom's founder, Ibn Saud, and many of whom occupy key government positions, is

the primary source of the consensus of opinion that is sought when making decisions. The opinions of major tribal sheikhs, chiefs of

well-known business dynasties, and significant members of the 'ulamā' (religious experts) are also taken into account.

Local Government System

The kingdom is divided into 13 administrative regions (manāṭiq), which in turn are divided into numerous districts. Each of them are being headed by the Regional governors which are appointed by the central government, usually from the royal family, and preside over one or more municipal councils, half of whose members are appointed and half elected. With their councils, the governors are responsible for such functions as finance, health, education, agriculture, and municipalities. The consultative principle operates at all levels of government, including the government of villages and tribes.

Functions of local government system in Saudi Arabia:

- **Administrative Divisions:** Saudi Arabia is divided into 13 administrative regions, each with a regional governor appointed by the King. These regions are further divided into governorates and municipalities.
- **Municipal Councils:** Most cities and towns in Saudi Arabia have elected municipal councils that are responsible for:
 - City planning and development
 - Maintenance of infrastructure like roads, water, and sanitation
 - Issuing certain licenses and permits
 - Overseeing public services like waste management








➤ **Governance at the Local Level:**

- Local government authorities implement national policies and regulations at the regional and municipal levels.
- They are responsible for delivering public services to citizens within their jurisdictions.
- Local councils have some decision-making powers over local affairs, but ultimate authority rests with the central government.

➤ **Public Participation:**

- Saudi citizens can participate in municipal elections to elect representatives to local councils.
- This provides a avenue for public input into local governance, though the councils have limited autonomous powers.

Local Government System of Administration in Iraq:

IRAQ	
Capital and largest city	Baghdad  33°20'N 44°23'E
Official languages	Arabic Kurdish
Recognised regional languages	Suret (Assyrian) Armenian Turkish/Turkmen
Ethnic groups (1987) ^[4]	75–80% Arabs 15–20% Kurds 5- 10% others (incl. Assyrians, Shabakis, Turkmen, Yazidis, Kawliya, Manda eans, and Persians)
Demonym(s)	Iraqi
Government	Federal parliamentary republic
President	Abdul Latif Rashid
Prime Minister	Mohammed Shia' Al Sudani
Legislature	Council of Representatives
Independence from the United Kingdom	
Independence declared	3 October 1932
Republic declared	14 July 1958
Current constitution	15 October 2005
Area	
Total	438,317 km ² (169,235 sq mi) (58th)
Water (%)	4.93 (as of 2024)
Population	
2024 estimate	 46,523,657 (34th)
Density	82.7/km ² (214.2/sq mi) (125th)
GDP (PPP)	2023 estimate
Total	 \$508.973 billion (48th)
Per capita	 \$11,742 ^[7] (56th)
GDP (nominal)	2023 estimate
Total	 \$254.993 billion (47th)
Per capita	 \$5,882 (111th)
Gini (2012)	29.5 low
HDI (2022)	 0.673 medium (128th)
Currency	Iraqi dinar (IQD)
Time zone	UTC+3 (AST)
Driving side	Right
Calling code	+964
ISO 3166 code	IQ

Iraq's local government system has experienced significant transformations due to historical factors and political instability. After the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, Iraq adopted a federal system, granting more autonomy to provinces. Iraq is divided into eighteen governorates, each with its council responsible for local administration. Developing a functioning local government system remains a challenge due to ongoing security issues and political divisions.

Constitutional Framework

Iraq was governed by the Ba'ath (Arabic: "Renaissance") Party from 1968 to 2003. The party's 1970 temporary constitution established Iraq as a republic, with legislative authority supposedly held by both the party-run Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) and an elected legislature. Without the RCC's consent, no law could be enacted. The president, who also chaired the RCC, oversaw the cabinet ministers, and supposedly reported to the RCC, held executive authority. Theoretically, an independent judiciary also held judicial power. However, the political system functioned with minimal adherence to constitutional principles, and President Saddam Hussein had nearly unrestricted authority from 1979 to 2003.

The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), led by a senior American diplomat, was established by the United States and its coalition allies after the Ba'ath government was overthrown in 2003. The 25-member Iraqi Governing Council (IGC), which was appointed by the CPA in July, took over some governing duties. In March 2004, an interim constitution was ratified by the IGC, and in October 2005, a public plebiscite approved a permanent constitution. This constitution created Iraq as a federal state, giving the national government limited control over issues like foreign policy, defense, and customs laws. Some topics are handled at the district and regional constituencies' discretion, while others (including general planning, education, and health care) fall under shared competencies.

The constitution is in many ways the framework for a fairly typical parliamentary democracy. The president is the head of state, the prime minister is the head of government, and the constitution provides for two deliberative bodies, the Council of Representatives (Majlis al-Nawwāb) and the Council of Union (Majlis al-Ittiḥād). The judiciary is free and independent of the executive and the legislature.

The president, who is nominated by the Council of Representatives and who is limited to two four-year terms, holds what is largely a ceremonial position. The head of state presides over state ceremonies, receives ambassadors, and endorses treaties and laws, and awards medals and honours. The president also calls upon the leading party in legislative elections to form a government (the executive), which consists of the prime minister and the cabinet and which, in turn, must seek the approval of the

Council of Representatives to assume power. The executive is responsible for setting policy and for the day-to-day running of the government. The executive also may propose legislation to the Council of Representatives.

The Council of Representatives does not have a set number of seats but is based on a formula of one representative for every 100,000 citizens. Ministers serve four-year terms and sit in session for eight months per year. The council's functions include enacting federal laws, monitoring the performance of the prime minister and the president, ratifying foreign treaties, and approving appointments; in addition, it has the authority to declare war.

The constitution is very brief on the issue of the Council of Union, the structure, duties, and powers of which apparently will be left to later legislation. The constitution only notes that this body will include representatives of the regions and governorates, suggesting that it will likely take the form of an upper house.

Local Government System








Three of the 18 muḥāfazāt (governorates) that make up the independent Kurdistan Region are separated from the rest of Iraq for administrative purposes. The president appoints the muḥāfiz, or governor, to each governorate. Each of the 91 aqdiyyah (districts) that make up the governorates is separated into nāḥiyāt (tracts), which are led by directors. The total number of tracts in Iraq is 141. Each city and town has its own municipal council, which is led by a mayor. Baghdad has its own governor and special status. In actuality, the Kurdish Autonomous Region only gained autonomy with the assistance of coalition forces after the Persian Gulf War, despite being established by government decree in 1974. It is run by a legislative council with 50 elected members. The Kurdistan Region was ratified under the 2005 constitution, which also authorizes the establishment of future regions in other parts of Iraq as part of a federal state.

Justice

Judicial affairs in Iraq are administered by the Supreme Judicial Council, which nominates the justices of the Supreme Court, the national prosecutor, and other high judicial officials for approval by the Council of Representatives. Members of the Supreme Court are required to be experts in civil law and Muslim canon law and are appointed by two-thirds majority of the legislature. The Supreme Court resolves legal disputes between the national government and lesser jurisdictions in addition to interpreting the constitution and making decisions on matters of national law. The judiciary was largely disregarded throughout the Ba'ath era, and the government established a wide range of extraordinary courts with powers that went beyond the constitution. The 2005 constitution expressly prohibits the creation of such courts. Due process of law must be followed in the establishment of all new courts.

Local Government System of Administration in Iran:



IN IRAN:

Capital and largest city	Tehran  35°41'N 51°25'E
Official languages	Persian
Recognised regional languages	show List of languages:
National language	Persian
Ethnic groups (2003 estimate)	show All
Demonym(s)	Iranian
Government	Unitary presidential theocratic Islamic republic
Supreme Leader	Ali Khamenei
President	Mohammad Mokhber (acting)
Vice President	Mohammad Mokhber
Speaker of the Parliament	Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf
Chief Justice	Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Eje'i
Secretary of the Guardian Council	Ahmad Jannati
Legislature	Islamic Consultative Assembly
Establishment history	
Pre-imperial dynasty	c. 3200 BC
Median kingdom	c. 678 BC
Achaemenid Empire	550 BC
Parthian Empire	247 BC
Sasanian Empire	224 AD
Iranian Intermezzo	821
Safavid Iran	1501
Afsharid Iran	1736
Zand dynasty	1751
Qajar Iran	1789
Pahlavi Iran	15 December 1925
Iranian Revolution	11 February 1979
Current Constitution	3 December 1979
Latest amendment	28 July 1989
Area	
Total	1,648,195 km ² (636,372 sq mi) (17th)
Water (%)	1.63 (as of 2015)
Population	
2024 estimate	 89,767,210 (17th)
Density	55/km ² (142.4/sq mi) (132nd)
GDP (PPP)	2024 estimate
Total	 \$1.855 trillion ¹ (19th)
Per capita	 \$21,220 (78th)
GDP (nominal)	2024 estimate
Total	 \$464,181 billion (34th)
Per capita	 \$5,310 (113th)
Gini (2019)	40.9 medium
HDI (2022)	 0.780 high (78th)
Currency	Iranian rial (ریال) (IRR)
Time zone	UTC+3:30 (IRST)
Date format	yyyy/mm/dd (SH)
Driving side	right
Calling code	+98
ISO 3166 code	IR

Iran's local government system emerged after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. The country is divided into thirty-one provinces, which further divide into counties, districts, and municipalities. The system integrates elements of Islamic

governance, with directly elected councils and mayors responsible for managing local affairs. However, the central government maintains significant influence over local governments.

Local Government System of Administration in Uae:

UAE	
Capital	Abu Dhabi  24°28'N 54°22'E
Largest city	Dubai  25°15'N 55°18'E
Official languages	Arabic
Common languages	Emirati Arabic, English
Ethnic groups (2015) ^[4]	59.4% South Asian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 38.2% Indian 9.5% Bangladeshi 9.4% Pakistani 2.3% other 11.6% Emirati Arab 10.2% Egyptian 6.1% Filipino 12.8% other
Religion (2005 est.) ^[4]	76% Islam (official) 9% Christianity 6% Hinduism 8% others
Demonym(s)	Emirati
Government	Federal Islamic semi-constitutional monarchy
President	Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Prime Minister	Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum
Vice Presidents	Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Legislature	Federal Supreme Council
Establishment	
British protectorate as part of Persian Gulf Residency	1820 and 1892
Independence from the United Kingdom	2 December 1971
Admitted to the United Nations	9 December 1971
Admission of Ras Al Khaimah	10 February 1972
Area	
Total	83,600 km ² (32,300 sq mi) (114th)
Water (%)	negligible
Population	
2020 estimate	9,282,410 (92nd)
2005 census	4,106,427
Density	121/km ² (313.4/sq mi) (110th)
GDP (PPP)	
Total	▲ \$952.171 billion (34th)
Per capita	▲ \$92,954 (6th)
GDP (nominal)	
Total	▲ \$536.829 billion (31st)

Per capita	▲ \$52,407 (20th)
Gini (2018)	26.0 low
HDI (2022)	▲ 0.937 very high (17th)
Currency	UAE dirham (AED)
Time zone	UTC+04:00 (GST)
Calling code	+971
ISO 3166 code	AE

The history and development of local government in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are shaped by the country's unique political and administrative context. The UAE is a federation of seven emirates, each with its own local government structure and varying degrees of autonomy. The powers and roles of both federal and local governments are defined by the Constitution.

The UAE government is headed by a federal government and local governments of the seven emirates. The federal government is led by the President and the Prime Minister, who are both elected by the Federal Supreme Council (FSC). The FSC is composed of the seven Emirs of the emirates, who select the President and cabinet. The local governments are headed by the Rulers of each emirate, who have significant powers to manage their own resources autonomously.

The UAE's local government system has evolved over time, reflecting the country's unique political and administrative context. The system has been shaped by the country's history of British colonial rule and the subsequent development of the country's oil industry. The UAE's local government system is characterized by a decentralized structure, with each emirate having its own local government system and varying degrees of autonomy.

The UAE's local government system has been influenced by the country's political history, including the discovery of oil in the region during the 1950s and the subsequent development of the country's oil industry. The UAE's local government system has also been shaped by the country's membership in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and its participation in regional and international organizations.

Background

In 1820, to protect the maritime trading routes, Great Britain devised the litoral known as the Pirate Coast to form the Trucial Coast and the seven small principalities that dotted its shores as the Trucial States. In 1971, Great Britain terminated its special treaty relationships with Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States and tried to create a federation that would have included all seven of the Trucial States as well as Qatar and Bahrain. After the withdrawal of Bahrain and Qatar on December 1 in 1971, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, and Fujairah decided to unite and form a federation of the new UAE.

Ras Al Khaimah joined them later in early 1972.

The UAE is a federal monarchy of seven emirates stretching along the southern coast of the Arabian/Persian Gulf. Six of the emirates (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, and Ras Al Khaimah) have territory on the Gulf, with Sharjah having additional and non-contiguous territory along the coast of the Gulf of Oman. Only Fujairah is located completely in the later portion of the federation. The country had a population of nearly 9,577,000 in

2015; 1,084,764 of them are nationals and compose 11.32% of the total 74 nationalities that live and cohabit together in the UAE.

Constitutional Laws and Legal Regulations on Local Governments

After the creation of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in 1971, a series of federal and local laws were developed with the purpose of regulating internal matters and external relations between the individual emirates and ensuring the implementation of transactions. According to the articles 120 and 121 of the UAE Constitution, the Federal Authorities are responsible for foreign affairs, security and defense, nationality and immigration issues, education, public health, currency and so forth. They are also responsible for areas that cover specific sectors such as labor relations, banking, delimitation of territorial waters, and extradition of criminals.

According to the Articles 116, 117, and 118 of the UAE constitution, each of the seven emirates (Dubai, Sharjah, Ras Al-Khaimah, Fujairah, Ajman, Umm AL Quwain, and Abu Dhabi) is allowed to exercise individual powers that are not assigned by the federal laws. The emirates that are members of the union (a) work to unify all or part of their public services by establishing a joint administrative unit and (b) coordinating their legislations in various fields as much as possible.

Moreover, the seven emirates have the right to adopt the federal judicial system as it is, maintain its own laws and decrees which cover a variety of topics, or refer to both. For example, the regulations on the municipal taxes, the fees for municipal services, contracting consultancy offices, or construction works vary from one emirate to another. This way, the courts in each emirate can maintain a certain degree of higher-level exchange while simultaneously considering local legal matters that are not necessarily assigned in the federal judicial system.

Election Processes for Local Governments

There is no election for the local councils at the municipal level; members, including the Mayor or the General Director of the Municipality, are appointed. However, there was a change in the political image of the country at the federal level with the election of half of the 40 members of the Federal National Council (FNC) in 2006 by an electoral college. This change is important for the country to develop and modernize its political process, understanding that the world is evolving. The latest election of the FNC was held in 2015, but the electorate was expanded to 225,000 voters, about twice as the number in 2011. There were 330 candidates (lower than in 2011), including 74 women (almost as many as in 2011), but only one woman was elected. The remaining 20 seats were appointed and 8 of these appointees were women. The next FNC elections are to be held in 2019. UAE officials assert that

there are plans to make all 40 seats elected, but it is not clear that this would apply to the 2019 vote.

Structure of Local Governments

Central, Regional, and Local Governments: Interrelations and Responsibilities

Federalism in the UAE is a unique governance style according to which the relationships between various national and local stakeholders from each emirate are formed. The central federal government includes five units with a number of executive, legislative, and judicial authorities. Currently, the UAE's federal system of government is composed of:

- The Federal Supreme Council,
- The President and his Deputy,
- The Council of Ministers (Cabinet),
- The Federal National Council (FNC), the parliamentary body,
- The Federal Supreme Court, the independent judiciary.

The highest authority is the Federal Supreme Council that consists of the seven rulers of the seven emirates and each Emirate has one single vote in the council resolutions and deliberations. The Council has both legislative and executive power and its general duties include sanctioning decrees, ratifying treaties and international agreements, setting the annual budget, and formulating and endorsing general policies and federal laws on all matters that are considered of common interest to the member emirates. The Council also approves the appointment or resignation of the prime minister of the federation as well as the president and judges of the Supreme Federal Court.

The president of the union, representing the union internally and internationally, presides over the meetings of the Supreme Council and directs its discussions. He has a prerogative to sign union laws, decrees, decisions (that the Supreme Council have sanctioned), and all the correspondences with foreign states and organizations. Furthermore, he can appoint and accept the resignation of the prime minister and ministers, the diplomatic corps, and other civil and military senior union officials (apart from the president and judges of the Federal Supreme Court).

The third layer of federal governance is the Cabinet which is consisted of the prime minister, his deputy, and the ministers. The main duties include the implementation of domestic policy as well as foreign policies of the union and the international treaties and agreements. The cabinet draws up the annual budget of the union and the final accounts and drafts decrees/decisions, issuing regulations on the provision of public services (including the work of the local police) as well as drafting and supervising the implementation of federal laws that are raised to the president of the union for submission to the Supreme Council (along with regulations on the implementation of these laws). Lastly, the council of ministers appoints and dismisses union employees and controls the conduct of work in departments and public services.

The fourth level of federal governance is the Federal National Council (FNC) of the union which is composed of 40 members who must meet certain criteria. A member must be a citizen of 20 years of age or older at the time of election and a permanent resident of one of the emirates he/she represents in the assembly and must act on behalf of all the people in the union (not only the emirate which he/she represents). The member also must

not have a criminal record or been rehabilitated in accordance with the law and must have the adequate reading and writing skills.

The last federal level is the Federal Supreme Court of the union, which is accorded independence under the Constitution. The Federal Supreme Court is comprised of five judges appointed by the Supreme Council. The judges decide on the constitutionality of federal laws and arbitrate on the inter-emirate disputes and the disputes between the Federal Government and the emirates. The UAE civil law does not dictate the political system in each emirate but sets the overall regulations that govern the practice of federalism in the UAE.

Finally, with regards to the Local Government, the emirates have full authority over their territories, i.e., maintaining law and order, provision of public services, development of social and economic standards within the emirate, enforcement of local ordinances and so on. The local government includes an Executive Council, a National Consultative Council, and many municipalities, each having its own Mayor or Director, Municipal Council, and Executive departments which have their own managers and sets of expertise.

This administrative structure differs from one emirate to another according to the size, the needs, and the priorities of its local inhabitants. Each of the seven emirates (Dubai, Sharjah, Ras Al-Khaimah, Fujairah, Ajman, Umm AL Quwain, and Abu Dhabi) has its own local governance system that functions in coordination with the central federal government. These systems diverge in size and complexity depending on a variety of factors such as population density, area size, and degree of development patterns. The general structure of public administration has been intact since its formulation in 1971. No drastic changes have been introduced in the past or are expected in the near future.

Bodies of Local Governments

Municipalities in the UAE, directly serving the people living within their boundaries, handle important local-level responsibilities and are primarily managed based on cultural norms and kinship, except for Abu Dhabi where a number of decision-makers are appointed according to their family ties or regional affiliations. Each municipality includes a Municipal Council and a directorate with several departments. Dubai Municipality has 34 departments, for example. They are divided according to their different sets of expertise and activities; these range from legal affairs, strategic planning, financial and technical audit of municipal assets, corporate performance and public relations, information technology (including geographic information systems), land and property survey, urban planning and construction to transportation, vehicle and equipment maintenance, preservation of architectural heritage/landmarks and antiquities, environmental management/horticulture and sustainable and renewable energy, food safety and quality control, drainage, irrigation, and sewage water treatment.

For example, the largest and most populous emirate, Abu Dhabi, has its own governing body with local departments that carry out various administrative functions. They administer services in the main governorates and function under the authority of a Municipal Council. A similar system of municipalities and departments exists in the other emirates. However, despite increasing efforts aimed at increasing decentralization, the municipal system of administration

in the UAE is still strongly dependent on the resources of the central government.

Councils of Local Governments

The municipal councils are the main decision-making authorities of the municipalities and are headed by the Municipality Chairman. The emirate of Abu Dhabi has its own National Consultative Council that functions in a manner that is like the Federal National Council and an Executive Council that is chaired by the Crown Prince. In the UAE, the Municipal Councils also carry out overlapping responsibilities on the federal and the local levels in their respective emirates. The main duties of the Municipal Council include:

- Maintaining an optimal use of the available public resources (including the monetary resources) to achieve the municipality's strategic objectives;
- Promoting institutional responsibility to achieve the municipality's strategic objectives;
- Building a culture of participation in policy formulation, service provision, decision-making and evaluation, and monitoring compliance with the laws;
- Responding to the requirements and needs of customers with quality and speed;
- Promoting a culture of accountability and transparency;
- Documenting procedures and regulations and determining the responsibilities as well as the rights of the citizens.

Mandates of Mayors in Local Governments

The mayor is the highest-ranking official in the municipalities. His/her duties (assisted by the various municipal executive departments) include:

- Delegating a wide range of authorities to local executive departments;
- Performing various tasks that involve government policies and operations;
- Approving the necessary decisions that implement the articles of the local laws, orders, and decrees;
- Serving on the Board of Directors of several associations;
- Contributing to the activities of non-governmental organizations.

In small or remote rural settlements, the mayor may choose to appoint a local representative, an Emir or a Wali (whose authority also emanates from general community consensus) to act on his/her behalf and manage the concerns of the local inhabitants.

Organizational Structure of Local Governments

The key focus of this UAE government strategy was to create synergy between the federal and the local governments. Other principles include revitalizing the regulatory and policy-making roles of the ministries and improving their decision-making mechanisms, increasing the efficiency of governmental bodies and upgrading their services in accordance with the needs of the people as well as reviewing and upgrading the existing legislation. There are seven local governments corresponding to the seven emirates, which vary in size and the scope of responsibilities due to their involvement along with the country's growth. They have also different mechanisms depending on the size of the population, the area of the emirate, and its degree of development.

As mentioned before, Abu Dhabi (as the largest and most populous emirate) has its own governing structures, chaired by the Crown Prince H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, under which there are many separate departments that are equivalent to ministries. There are also a number of autonomous agencies with assigned powers such as Abu Dhabi Environmental Agency, Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority, Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage, and Abu Dhabi Health Authority. Regarding the regional structure, Abu Dhabi is divided into two regions: Al Gharbia (previously known as the Western Region) and the Eastern Region, headed by the Ruler's Representatives. As for the municipalities, there are two municipalities in the main cities of Abu Dhabi and Al Ain, each one having a nominated City Council.

The emirate of Dubai has also its own Executive Council which was established in 2003 and is headed by Crown Prince Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. On the other hand, Sharjah and Ajman also have Executive Councils; in addition to that, Sharjah has developed its own Consultative Council. Furthermore, Sharjah, having three territories on the east coast of the country, has adopted the practice of devolving some authority to the local level, with branches of the Sharjah Emiri Diwan (Court), headed by deputy chairmen, in both Kalba and Khor Fakkan. A similar pattern of municipalities, departments, and autonomous agencies can be found in each of the other emirates.

In smaller settlements, the ruler of each emirate may choose a representative, an Emir or a Wali, to act as an intermediary who carries the concerns of the inhabitants directly to the government. In most cases, these are leading local figures, who have both the consensus of their community and the confidence of the ruler. Another traditional type of direct democratic tribal practice is the "Open Majlis". This emphasizes a strong principal that the people should have a direct access to their rulers so that they can express their opinions. In many emirates, this tradition is still maintained by the ruler and several other senior family members. In "Majlis," the audience may discuss a wide range of topics, both of personal or public interests. This "parallel" system of governance enriches the political participation; also, in a cultural context, it helps to maintain the identity of the country against the rapid economic and social changes.

Strategic Planning and Performance Assessment

In 2007, Abu Dhabi launched its vision for 2030 to manage the development in an effective way. The Vision 2030 is designed to establish a planning culture and to actively respond to the future development needs as well as to introduce strong guidelines for sustainable development. In its 2013-17 development plan, Abu Dhabi was to invest nearly Dh30 billion, which would encourage the economic growth and job creation (5000 jobs) besides expanding the non-hydrocarbon sector.

Housing and infrastructure would compose a large portion of these investments such as Abu Dhabi International Airport and the Etihad Rail network, which would provide services (initially in freight) from the border of Saudi Arabia in the south west to Ras al-Khaimah and the east coast. The vision also aims to create a sustainable city by means of concentrating growth, introducing transport choice, creating mixed-use and pedestrian-friendly streets, implementing a more sustainable and cost-effective infrastructure, and protecting and enhancing the natural environment. The development schedule will include the city of Al Ain and Gharbia (the Western Region).

Dubai also launched its plan in 2007. It recognizes that urban planning is a primordial channel to meet the needs of sustainable development while preserving natural resources. Therefore, to implement this vision, Dubai Urban Planning Committee brought together key stakeholders such as the Municipality, the Road and Transport Authority, the Electricity and Water Authority, the Dubai Land Department as well as the developers such as the Dubai Holdings, Emaar, and Nakheel. There is an ongoing work to update the vision in line with the revised assumptions that were formed during the financial crisis and to boost the UAE economy to prepare it for a new era.

Other smaller municipalities such as Ajman do not have their vision plans ready; however, they took some steps for further development of their cities. The Director General of Ajman Municipality announced that the city would be divided into sectors and residential areas with roads, green belts, and residential parks that would separate them from other functions such as the industrial areas. The idea behind this would be to facilitate rapid development in the emirate, attract investors, and boost tourism.

With regard to the performance assessment, the State Audit Institution conducts reviews of all municipalities and government departments that are partially or fully publicly-owned in respect to the law no. 7 of 1976, the law no. 9 of 1975, the law no. 22 of 1995, and the decree no. 49 of 1997. It reports any administrative or financial misconduct to a specialized disciplinary council and to the concerned administrative unit. The same laws also prohibit the withholdment of the required information and the obstruction of the auditors' access to the financial books. All auditors are registered at the Ministry of Economy and Commerce.

Duties and Responsibilities

The role of the municipal councils in the UAE does not differ from other countries. For instance, the councils are responsible for improving services for residents of their districts, such as public works and infrastructure. In addition, the municipal councils can be powerful tools to promote civic awareness and participation among the nation's citizens to involve them in the affairs of their communities and to enable them to be more than just spectators in the development of their country.

Infrastructure

The UAE has granted substantial budget allocations to infrastructure projects in recent years. The municipalities of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah, for example, developed infrastructure projects such as the new roads and bridges and installed or extended the public transport systems. This includes the projects that are under way and in the planning stage. Abu Dhabi Vision 2030 was named in a list of the top 100 infrastructure projects worldwide; World Cities Edition featured the profiles of Vision 2030, Masdar City, Paris-Sorbonne University on Reem Island, and the Yas Island Waste Management which is an automated vacuum waste-management system that is consisted of 43 inlet points and 5.3km of pipes and which can suck 40 tons of waste every day collected from the sites around the island. Al Gharbia region has its share of the infrastructure projects. The region will host "Barakah" which will be the first nuclear power plant in the Middle East (currently under construction) as well as the biggest solar power plant in the world (Shams 1). The largest petrochemicals facility in the world, the largest oilfields, and refineries in the UAE are located in the same region.

Housing

Housing in the UAE is a central concern; therefore, to provide housing for the Emirati citizens, the municipalities combine their efforts with the federal government (i.e. the Ministry of Public Works and Housing) which reviews applications for housing, takes decisions on these applications, provides recommendations, and offers housing loans, housing grants as well as services for people with special needs. On the other side, private companies had and still have an active involvement in the development of the housing sector in the UAE, particularly in Dubai. Most of the recent developments were planned, financed, and implemented by the private companies, and the local authorities played the role of the facilitator and sometimes the partner.

There are three types of housing assistance programs at the National Level overseen by the Federal Government:

- The first one provides home loans and grants to citizens who own a piece of land;
- The second one offers interest-free and long-term loans for citizens who can repay them;
- The third one provides free housing for low-income citizens.

The Sheikh Zayed Housing Program established in 1999 funds housing projects for citizens with low incomes by providing interest-free loans that are repayable over a 25-year period. Grants and non-reimbursable assistance are dispensed to the poorest segments of the society. Furthermore, each emirate has its own housing program that provides support for the Emirati citizens such as the Sheikh Khalifa housing program in Abu Dhabi which includes building new homes and refurbishing the existing ones, the Mohammed bin Rashid Housing Foundation in Dubai that ensures access to decent housing by providing housing loans or buying turnkey homes, and the Sheikh Saud Housing Program that aims to meet the housing needs of citizens in Ras Al Khaimah.

Culture

Culture is a key that reflects the UAE's important traditions and the country's national identity. Cultural events that were hosted in the country and attracted international interest from the global media reveal the cosmopolitan image of the cities in the UAE as well as illustrating their success in bridging East and West. The cultural life in the UAE is very rich, especially in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. They host high-end cultural activities which attract celebrities from all over the world (such as Cate Blanchet, Richard Gere, and Madonna). There is a myriad of yearly festivities held such as Abu Dhabi Film Festival, AD Music Festival, AD Art Hub, and Abu Dhabi International Book Fair. In Dubai, there is a vast variety of cultural activities organized such as Dubai International Film Festival, Art Dubai, Dubai Youth Theatre, and Dubai Opera which has recently been opened (in 2017) and started to host high-end events.

Moreover, Abu Dhabi's 2030 Economic Vision is to promote the heritage, the culture, and the traditions of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi worldwide through the concerned authorities such as Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH), Abu Dhabi's Saadiyat Island Cultural District as well as the planned Louvre Abu Dhabi, Zayed National Museum, and Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. Sharjah hosts many events as well such as Sharjah International Book Fair and Sharjah Biennale. The pearl of the crown is the

“Expo 2020” which will be hosted by Dubai. The lucrative event spanning six months is expected to attract more than 25 million visitors to the UAE under the theme “Connecting Minds, Creating the Future”.

The proposed site for the World “Expo 2020” Dubai was chosen as a 438-hectare site on the south-western edge of the city, known as the Dubai Trade Centre – Jebel Ali, adjacent to Dubai World Central airport.

Social Development

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MLSA) is responsible for carrying all aspects of social affairs, including the recommendation, the implementation, and the evaluation of policies and plans on social developments. In addition, the MLSA supports and supervises the activities of the NGOs. The government is heavily investing in the field of social development whether through community development or community organization programs. So far, the outcome of these policies is to a great extent satisfactory.

Education

As per the UAE’s constitution, the education falls under the prerogative of the federal government represented by the Ministry of Education (MoE). In 2016, the government allocated almost 21% of its federal budget to the education sector to improve the system by hiring accredited teachers and developing smart learning environments. Likewise, the MoE established “Education 2020,” an ambitious five-year plan designed to improve the quality of the students’ learning process and the way in which the teachers deliver curriculum. The UAE’s educational system is divided into public schools, private schools and higher education. The public schools follow the Arabic curriculum whereas the private schools follow 15 different curricula.

Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) is the regulatory body that provides licensing and accreditation to private schools in Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, and the Western Region and sets the minimum standards for educational outcomes besides working closely with the MoE in formulating the emirate’s education plan. Knowledge and Human Development (KHDA) is responsible for inspecting all private schools in Dubai to ensure proper quality of education, from early learning to higher and continuing education. As for the rest of the emirates (Sharjah, Ajman, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah, and Umm Al Quwain), the MoE monitors the education system at public schools focusing on the standard and the level of education.

Concerning the higher education, the U.A.E. has become an international hub with internationally recognized universities, mainly from the U.S. and Europe, including New York University (NYU), Paris-Sorbonne University, American University of Dubai (AUD), American University of Sharjah (AUS), New York Institute of Technology (NYIT), Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT Dubai), British University, Canadian University, Waterloo University, and Wollongong University among many others. Dubai’s knowledge village gathered international universities, training centers, e-learning, research, and development companies in one location.

Healthcare

The UAE’s health sector has evolved rapidly in the past decade as public and private investments boast a highly-developed healthcare infrastructure. Healthcare is provided to all UAE citizens

for free in the government hospitals and clinics and is regulated at both the federal and emirate levels. The UAE Ministry of Health was established in 1972 to, among other things, license companies and individuals that provide healthcare services, build and manage health facilities, and regulate various areas of healthcare. Besides, the Ministry oversees the healthcare system in Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, and Fujairah and makes an effort to improve the level of healthcare services in these emirates. Recently, Sharjah has established the Sharjah Health Authority. The Health Authority of Abu Dhabi (HAAD) and the Dubai Health Authority (DHA) were established to regulate healthcare services and improve their quality, to develop medical education and research, to plan and promote healthcare investment, and to operate government’s healthcare facilities. DHA is authorized to regulate all healthcare services in Dubai, including those located in the free zones: Dubai Healthcare City and Dubai Biotechnology and Research Park.

The Federal Law No. 13 of 2009 established the Emirates Health Authority (EHA), which has regulatory functions and initiatives to encourage cooperation between the federal and local health authorities as well as between such authorities and the private sector. The EHA is based in Sharjah and works closely with the HAAD in Abu Dhabi and the DHA in Dubai.

Local Economic Development

The outlook of the UAE economy is positive despite the drop in the oil prices at the end of 2014. The economy will continue to grow since economic diversification efforts have led to a decline in the contribution of oil exports as the pillar of the economy. The country has set itself a goal of less than a 5% contribution of oil to the economy by 2021. The UAE remains the second-largest Arab economy after Saudi Arabia.

The future visions and policies of the Cities and Municipalities are to encourage investment in non-oil activities for various reasons in order to expand the panoply of local sources of income and to be less dependent on federal assistance. This effort is matched by the central government policies that stimulate the private sector and increase its involvement in the provision of municipal services. The city of Abu Dhabi has a strong economy due to its dependence on petroleum, but the city’s vision for 2030 will encourage the diversification of resources, generating activities that are less dependent on energy. The city has stimulated the activities and projects in the domains of cultural tourism, media, health care, financial services, and renewable energies. Dubai, being less reliant on petroleum, is developing other sources of income to boost its economy and has positioned itself as a regional hub for trade, transport, banking, and especially for luxury tourism. Sharjah, the third biggest emirate, has built up a solid manufacturing sector and is now focusing on developing green business and sustainable tourism driven by “Shurooq,” the emirate’s investment body.

The smaller emirates/cities are also evolving their economies and fiscal policies through distinguishing themselves in specific domains. Ras Al Khaimah has supported the expansion of the industrial activities, being the leader in ceramic and porcelain industries as well as in the financial and aviation services. While the city of Fujairah, due to its strategic coastline location on the Gulf of Oman outside the Straits of Hormuz, has emerged as a major oil and chemical storage and products trading hub, it is ranked as the second largest bunkering port in the world. Ajman, the smallest

emirate in size, has invested in high educational infrastructure and industry. The emirate/city also encouraged the inflow of international investors by giving them 100% ownership of real estate. The emirate/city of Umm Al Quwain, traditionally reliant on industries such as cement, pharmaceuticals and glass, has elaborated plans to develop a sophisticated ecotourism industry around its natural beauty and historical sites.

Financial Management

The cities/municipalities in the UAE have different capabilities to create flexible but sustainable sources of revenue which permit them to improve the quality of the services to be provided to their citizens. For example, the Budget and Financial Planning Sector of the Municipality of Dubai links the city goals to the available financial resources and prepares the Financial Plan for the medium and long term. Moreover, it cooperates and communicates with the government agencies in the Emirate to find optimal ways to achieve financial sustainability and to meet the necessary financial support to government entities in the Emirate of Dubai. The city's division works to raise the financial efficiency of the government and makes recommendations on important financial issues to contribute to the Emirate's strategic economic goals.

Environmental Issues: Climate Change, Water/Waste Water

Management The Federal Environmental Agency (FEA) is responsible for the protection and enhancement of the environment in UAE through formulating and implementing the required policies and plans, supervising the plans and activities of different institutions, facilitating the necessary coordination, and preventing any negative activities that may harm the environment.

Climate Change

The UAE's Vision 2021 document lists the quality of air and water resources among the top priorities in the country's strategy. The UAE still takes the 3 place in terms of its ecological footprint per capita as listed in the World Wildlife Fund's 2014 Living Planet Report while Qatar and Kuwait are in the second and the first place respectively. Population growth and air pollution are the major contributors to this situation and put additional pressure on infrastructure as well as water and sewage treatment plants. As a result, the UAE is subject to frequent sand and dust storms, which can severely reduce visibility. Desalination plants compensate for the lack of freshwater resources, but desertification (land degradation caused by aridity) and beach pollution from oil spills are serious problems.

It is recommended to form a national entity to oversee the problems of climate change. This unit could set policies and plans as well as adopting a cross-sectoral coordination for tangible results in this regard. Local government needs to demonstrate control in 3 main areas:

- Making an effort to push the reforms at the higher levels of government to include the question of climate change in the government's plans and strategy;
- Setting a clear target for carbon reduction to monitor performance;
- Moving beyond mitigation to include a focus on adaptation and integrating it into a wide range of governmental entities.

Water

Climate change stresses the management of water resources in the UAE. The long-term variations in temperature and precipitation are expected to have adverse effects on the already fragile natural resources. With the U.A.E.'s water demand growing annually, the country's water infrastructure is under significant pressure. With one of the highest per-capita consumption rates in the world and dropping groundwater reserves, groundwater use exceeds the regenerating capacity by a factor of 15, and, at the same time, the demand for water is expected to grow 30 per cent by 2030. Accordingly, water demand in Abu Dhabi is estimated to grow by 5-6% per year. In Dubai, the DEWA recorded an increase in the desalinated water production capacity by 17 per cent in 2012. The same trend is observed in Sharjah and other smaller emirates where the water capacity is often barely sufficient to cater for the needs of growing industries and rising populations.

The Environment Agency in Abu Dhabi estimates that the country's groundwater supply will run out within 55 years if its use is not restricted and the mitigation measures are not taken. The country continues to use groundwater at a rate that is 20 times higher than its ability to replenish it.

As the main source of drinking water, the UAE is heavily reliant on desalination plants for water production; more than 90% of its potable water is produced via desalination and is expected to increase to 96.5% of all water produced by 2019.

Therefore, the Ministry of Environment and Water and the local environment agencies in the emirates are actively promoting water conservation and rain water harvest, principally in parks and farms representing the highest consumption rate of the water supply with 70%, as well as finding alternative energy-efficient ways to produce drinking water in order to address the high cost of production.

Wastewater

In the wastewater sector, the UAE has adopted the approach of reusing treated wastewater in landscaping, such as irrigation of gardens, green spaces, and reforestation trees, aiming to relieve pressure on other water resources. The key project undertaken by Abu Dhabi's Sewerage and Services Company (ADSSC) is the Strategic Tunnel Enhancement Program (STEP) to collect and treat wastewater discharged from residential, commercial, and industrial buildings. Wastewater is only re-used at about 45% while the remaining 55% is being discharged into the environment. Sharjah Municipality opened an underground sewage treatment plant in the emirate in April 2012, catering for the residential areas of Al Majaz, Al Taawun, Al Nahda, and Industrial Area 1.

Dubai is in the process of developing a significant tunnel project. In an interview with "The National" in October 27, 2016, the Director General of the Dubai Municipality mentioned that the tunnel project comprises the construction of two deep tunnels underneath the city with a combined length of 75km, supported by 140km of sewers and pumping stations (from Bur Dubai to Jebel Ali and from Deira to Al Warsan treatment plant). The tunnel depths range from five meters to 90m, and the tunnels may be up to 10m wide. This allows for a train system to be installed that can be used in the prolonged dry periods to transport cargo under the city. Moreover, all future projects can be plugged into this drainage

network, which would remove the requirement for the 140 existing pumping stations.

Urban Planning

Urban and land use planning are the framework that could manage growth, decrease pressure on future demands for lands, and ensure sustainability. Due to the phenomenal development in many sectors of its urban life, the UAE has experienced major changes in land uses, and most of them took place in the coastal areas. Municipalities are the authorities that are responsible for urban planning in the UAE, except for Abu Dhabi where the Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council (AD-UPC) is the agency responsible for the future of the emirate's urban environments and the expert authority behind Abu Dhabi 2030 Urban Structure Framework Plan. The Urban Planning Council defines the shape of the emirates and ensures factors such as sustainability, infrastructure capacity, community planning, and quality of life by overseeing development across the city and the whole emirate. The UPC ensures best planning practices for both new extensions and existing urban areas and manages the sustainable urban growth of the emirate by creating urban strategies, master plans, policies, and regulations. It develops correspondingly the necessary procedures for development approval by working closely with the stakeholders of the public and private sectors.

The Urban Structure Framework Plan provides conceptual solutions to shape the growth of Abu Dhabi over the next quarter of a century. These solutions first address the major issues that shape the urban form—the environment, land use, transportation, and the capital city image. The plan's key directions include sustainability, environmental uniqueness, evolving culture, identity, and opportunity, excellence and livability, and connectivity.

The emirate of Dubai has become an international hub and has experienced tremendous urban growth over the past two decades. It has pursued an aggressive economic diversification agenda, at the core of which was an immense, heavily-funded program of urban development, and internationalized real estate markets. The array of mega-projects underway in recent years has brought construction and real estate to the forefront as two of the most important non-oil sectors in the city's economy. Unlike Abu Dhabi, Dubai has not updated the Urban Master Plan (the Dubai 2020) that envisioned to make.

Dubai as a modern Arab city and a vibrant regional gateway to promote social, economic, and environmental sustainability to address transportation, housing affordability, cultural integration. Nevertheless, the city's urban development plan will need to be revised considering the impact of the new oil prices and the international economic trends as well as the Expo 2020.

The Departments of Planning in smaller cities are also active in and are responsible for the areas such as planning and modernization as well as the future residential developments for the growing populations and other land use such as administrative and industrial. Ras Al Khaimah went for a more comprehensive approach by elaborating the city's Structure Plan.

Transportation

The UAE maintains a strong focus on the expansion and maintenance of an efficient transportation system. The system is composed of ports, airports, efficient road and public transportation networks. They have supported a strategic plan aimed at developing

the UAE into a major transport hub. Despite the existence of 3 airports in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah, the Dubai International Airport is one of the fastest growing air transport hubs in the world, serving more than 15 million passengers yearly. As for maritime transport, Dubai, with Jebel Ali, Port Rashid, Hamriya Port, and Dubai Creek, serves more than 13,000 vessels each year and handles a significant share of the world's shipping cargo. Abu Dhabi and Sharjah have major ports as well as ports for the export of crude oil, refined products, and petrochemicals. Moreover, the public transportation witnessed a significant development only in the last decade due to the fact that the local people use only their private vehicles for commuting. The city of Dubai was the most advanced in terms of its Surface Transportation Master Plan whose focus is on providing the city with alternative forms of public transportation. Specific plans include a grid of boulevards instead of large freeways to dissipate traffic flow, fully automated tram and metro networks, increase in the bus network, and the enrichment of pedestrian movement in the city with the momentous "City Walk" project. Once complete, the transport system will be an integrated network of highways/ metro/tram services with a parallel system of facilities of buses/taxis/bicycles, which will be the first comprehensive urban transportation network in the Arabian Peninsula.

Challenges and Opportunities

Authority and Subsidiarity Principles

The powers of the various federal institutions and their relationship with the separate local institutions have changed since the establishment of the state. Under the terms of the Constitution, the rulers may relinquish certain areas of authority, on a strategic level, to the Federal Government. The relationship between the federal and the local systems of the government continues to evolve. As the smaller emirates have benefited from education, for example, they have also been able to recruit personnel to local government services that were once handled on their behalf by the federal institutions. These new systems of government have not, however, replaced the traditional forms that coexist alongside. The key driver behind such developments remains the performance and efficiency in the delivery of services to citizens and the expatriate population residing in the UAE. The key focus of this strategy of the UAE government was to create synergy between the federal and the local governments. Other principles include revitalizing the regulatory and policy-making roles of the ministries and improving their decision-making mechanisms, increasing the efficiency of governmental bodies and upgrading their services in accordance with the needs of the people as well as reviewing and upgrading the existing legislation.

The UAE government strategy for 2011-2013 clearly identifies and integrates federal and local efforts and creates synergy between the federal and the local governments. It also meets the goals of the Vision 2021 and strives to ensure that all government work is conducted according to a set of guiding principles that puts citizens first and promotes an accountable, innovative, and forward-looking government. Some of the seven principles that steer government work are:

- Improving the role of the federal entities in formulating effective regulations and integrated policies by successful planning and enforcement;
- Boosting effective coordination and cooperation among the federal entities and with the local governments;

- Focusing on delivering high-quality, customer-centric, and integrated government services;
- Enhancing transparency and accountable governance mechanisms throughout the federal entities.

Corporate Capacity and Urban Service Delivery

The central government is currently evaluating the level of efficiency and effectiveness of the municipalities in the UAE. While the municipalities are locally-active, a privatization trend is gaining momentum to meet the expanding needs of rapid development; public-private corporations are established on a gradual basis to provide high quality municipal services.

Generally, the level and quality of the city's service provision is never adequate due to various reasons such as the physical characteristics of the area, its development deficiencies, technical and managerial capacities of the municipality, financial resources, and resource management. The decrease of the municipal financial resources due the drop in the oil prices presents a momentous challenge for the municipalities in the UAE to keep the same quality of the municipal services provided to the citizens and expatriates as well as face the ever-increasing demand of these services.

Not all the cities and municipalities in the UAE have the same managerial and financial capacities as those of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and, to a certain extent, Sharjah. The other less developed cities face multiple development challenges with limited tools to increase their resources and capacities to have access to technologies, which causes them to lose credibility vis-à-vis their populations when compared to Dubai, for example. Recently, even rich cities such as Abu Dhabi are on the research of new revenues to raise their income. The municipality introduces 3% municipal charge on the households, based on the value of rental contracts added to customers' electricity and water bills. The new fees are payable only by expatriate tenants. This is due to the continued cost-cutting and downsizing in the oil and government sectors.

Therefore, there is a need for knowledge transfer through development assistance, smart investments in the infrastructure of information communications technology (ICT) as well as flexible and effective use of e-government to bring about substantial returns on investment while supporting the sustainable development agenda. Under the right conditions, such efforts will in turn deliver multiple benefits such as better access to essential services and can create savings by streamlining and simplifying government processes as well as enhancing accountability and transparency.

Resilience

Sustainable Urban Development

The UAE has been a leader in the Middle East to initiate and implement sustainable strategies whose main objective is to provide residents with the highest quality of life, paired with the lowest environmental footprint. Among the sustainable strategies is the UAE Vision 2021, and it aims to make the country one of the best worldwide through six federal priorities:

- A cohesive society and preserved identity;
- A safe, public, and fair judiciary;
- A competitive knowledge economy;
- A first-rate education system;
- World-class healthcare;
- Sustainable environment and infrastructure.

These are supported by the UAE National Agenda which includes a set of national indicators to measure performance outcomes in each of the priority areas such as education, healthcare, economy, police and security, housing, infrastructure, and government services. The focus is to shift the UAE towards a knowledge economy with a happy and healthy population, where innovation, research, science, and technology will form the basis of a knowledge-based, highly productive, and competitive economic model. In response to the national initiatives, Dubai is always the pioneer city to transform its economic model and to take action on sustainable development.

With its "Dubai Plan 2021", it considers the people and society as the bedrock of the city who shape the future of the Emirate. The plan also addresses the built and the natural environment and considers the living experience of the locals and visitors to be the result of the interaction of the economic and social services with the environment. In the same context, the ambitious "Dubai Clean Energy Strategy 2050" aims to change the rules of the energy game in the Middle East and to increase the share of clean energy to 25% by 2030 and 75% by 2050.

To this end, the UAE Vision 2021, the National Agenda, the Green Growth Strategy, the Green Economy for Sustainable Development Initiative, The Abu Dhabi Vision 2030, and the Dubai Clean Energy Strategy 2050 all consider sustainability as fundamental to propel the UAE's economy and to spur it onwards.

Urban Risks

Urban risks create vulnerabilities and it stems from the complex relationships between the urban development process (social, economic, environmental) and the decision-making processes and outcomes. Climate change induces increases in temperature and leads to a high frequency of droughts and water scarcity associated with rapid urban sprawl, environmental degradation, and concentration of services and infrastructure in urban areas. However, the biggest challenge for the cities in the UAE is the water scarcity and the rise of the sea level. The Emirates desalinate the equivalent of four billion bottles of water a day which, on the one hand, produce emissions of carbon dioxide that have helped give the UAE one of the world's largest carbon footprints and, on the other hand, generate enormous amounts of heated sludge that is pumped back into the sea. Today, the Gulf's salinity levels have risen to 47,000 parts per million from 32,000 about 30 years ago, which is enough to threaten local fauna and marine life. Another major risk that encounters the cities in the UAE is the rise of the sea level. Based on IPCC's sea level rise projections for 2050, Dubai's metropolitan area is at a high risk of flooding which may result in population displacement and damage to the city's economy. In response, the Dubai municipality should incorporate an adaptation strategy for the sea level rise into Dubai's urban development plan and create a food hazard map (see Figure 2) to pinpoint the scale and scope of potential risks coupled with urban development along the coast. The map will allow urban planners to identify high risk locations and adapt their land use policies accordingly. It will also stress the already developed areas to be protected against flooding and erosion due to sea level rise. The combination of limited freshwater supply and usage habits, as well as the hazard of sea level rise to the desalination facilities, it is endorsed, for risk mitigation, to develop comprehensive urban development plans for the Emirati cities as part of the national plan, incorporating climate change adaptation, urban spatial plans, and decision making processes as

well as considering the varying capacities of the UAE's cities, building capacities to manage and implement the urban risk reduction process, and identifying innovative partnerships for crisis prevention and response with the private sector at the national and the local levels.

Migration: External and Internal Migrations

The UAE has been a country that attracted migration even before the oil discoveries in the 50s and the 60s of the last century. Abu Dhabi and Dubai have attracted fows of migrants from India and seasonal workers and traders from neighboring Persia, who are mostly settled in Dubai, since the 19th century. In 1962, the expatriates were estimated to be half of the Abu Dhabi's population.

Recently, the migrants have made up 88.5% of the country's total population and most of them are believed to have come from Asia, especially from India. In the employed population, foreigners were reported to be the largest share of the Dubai's employed population in 2011, where 99.5% of them are employed by the private sector. In the public sector, non-Emiratis comprised 40% of the UAE's public sector's workforce in 2013. Since 2010, the UAE significantly reformed its migration policies, frst, with the emergence of nationals' unemployment: 9.2% in the total population which called for improving the monitoring of labor migration to the UAE, and second, for security reasons that led to tightened control over migrants. Irregular migrants were also targeted by rounding up operations and amnesty campaigns, the last one was in 2016.

Theoretical Framework:

The theory that would therefore be most appropriate to better analyse the extent of comparative local government administrative system during this 21st century is efficiency services theory. This theory believes that local governments are established to provide social services effectively and efficiently in accordance to the interests of the people. The point is that local government because of its closeness to an area can provide certain services more efficiently than the central government. Sharpe 1968 provides a very strong case for local government because it is the most efficient agent for providing those services that are essentially local. He suggested that the efficient performance of these services is so compelling that if local government did not exist something else would have to be created in its place. This, Sharpe argued would not be a decentralized branch of the national government because such central government departments can never achieve the needed level of coordination that a local government can forge. Thus, in this theory, the main functional responsibility of local government is to carry out effectively the real local duties allocated to it and that is the highest efficiency rate. This theory enables the critical analysis of local government administration in Nigeria in this 21st century in order to detect the major problems and prospects over the years

Research Methodology

The primary, secondary method of data collection will be adopted this include extraction of relevant information from public documents, journals, Newspapers, Magazines, Conference Papers, Books, Radio and Television commentaries. Thus, the research design adopted is exploratory research design. This is because it satisfies the researcher curiosity and desire for better understanding

of the subject matter. Thus, this enables the researcher to obtain background information on the subject matter.

This study adopted the descriptive-analytical method because of its significance and the nature of this research. The study's main objective is to evaluate local governments' problems and challenges as perceived by elected local leaders, mayors, and local employees. To identify the most crucial reform techniques to address the challenges, it was decided that a qualitative approach using in-depth, faceto-face interviews was a better method for meeting this objective (Hox & Boeiji, 2005).

These interviews were held with a selected number of managers, including provincial and local council administrators. Such interviews provide an informed source capable of addressing the problems and challenges facing their local units. This research assumed descriptive approaches in defining challenges affecting local governments in Jordan. The questionnaire items' initial selection to be included in the instrument tool was made through a comprehensive literature review. The study revised these items to ensure relevance, accuracy, readability, and compatibility with the local context and the cultural environment of local government organs and staff in Jordan. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed to municipalities members in leading positions. A total of 300 questionnaires was used for the analysis. In this study, a Likert-scale procedure was also adopted. The respondents were requested to narrate their perceptions regarding the levels of the arrangement upon certain declarations.

The study evaluates the heights of problems and challenges affecting the local organizations, characterized by environment protection, responsiveness, capacity building, public participation, and financial viability as supposed by the municipalities' elected members. To identify the essential strategies and ways to address these challenges and problems, qualitative techniques were employed through in-depth, face-to-face consultations. This was deemed the best process for meeting this objective. Respondents were asked to state their views on the most effective reform strategies.

Summary of Discussion:

In summary, the history and development of local government in the UAE are shaped by the country's unique political and administrative context, its history of British colonial rule, and its membership in regional and international organizations.

The local government administrative systems in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, and the UAE exhibit variations due to their different political structures, ranging from monarchies to an Islamic Republic. Saudi Arabia and the UAE are monarchies, while Iran is an Islamic Republic. Jordan and Iraq have constitutional monarchies and parliamentary republics, respectively. Decentralization efforts and the role of local governments in service delivery vary significantly across these countries.

Saudi Arabia:

- Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy with a system of regional and municipal councils.
- The country is divided into regions, each headed by an appointed emir (governor) who acts as a minister.

- Governorates exist within the regions, and these contain municipal councils.
- While municipal council members are partly elected, the central government retains significant power, including the ability to dissolve councils and appoint contractors.
- UN-Habitat reports that the central government can also intervene in local financial matters and development projects.

United Arab Emirates:

- The UAE is a federation of seven emirates, each with its own ruler (Sheikh) and a degree of autonomy.
- The Federal National Council serves as a legislative body, with some members chosen through limited elections.
- The UAE also has a federal government that extends to e-government services.

Iran:

- Iran is an Islamic Republic with a complex system involving both religious and elected officials.
- Elections are held for the president, parliament (Majlis), and the Assembly of Experts.
- The Assembly of Experts elects the Supreme Leader, who holds ultimate authority.

Jordan:

- Jordan is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system.
- Local governments are established at the governorate and municipal levels.
- Decentralization efforts are ongoing to enhance the role of local governments in service delivery.

Iraq:

- Iraq is a parliamentary republic with a federal system.
- Local governments operate at the governorate and district levels.
- Decentralization policies aim to empower local authorities in managing their affairs.

Differences and Similarities:

• Monarchies vs. Republics:

Saudi Arabia and the UAE are monarchies, while Iran is an Islamic Republic, and Jordan and Iraq have systems with elected representatives.

• Centralization vs. Decentralization:

Decentralization efforts vary, with some countries like Jordan and Iraq showing more emphasis on devolving power to local governments.

• Elections:

While Saudi Arabia and the UAE have limited elections at the municipal level, Iran holds elections for various national offices.

• Religious Influence:

Iran's system has a strong religious element, with the Supreme Leader holding ultimate authority, while the other

countries are less explicitly theocratic, though Islam plays a significant role in their legal and social systems.

Conclusion

To accomplish the examination destinations and answer its inquiries, an experimental and expressive methodology was utilized. Two strategies for data assortment were embraced. The primary system is quantitative, through a questionnaire to recognize the crucial problems confronting local government units. The second is subjective, through face-to-face interviews with a purposive sample of elected local leaders who can propose compelling methodologies and reform techniques to solve these problems. The examination uncovered that Jordan's regional administration is confronted, to a severe extent, with the accompanying difficulties: responsiveness, capacity building, fiscal viability, environmental protection, and public involvement.

The study outcomes on the capacity building's problems exposed that the local administration encounters major problems in allocating monetary resources to employees' education and development. The limited financial resources can explain this in diverse sections and insufficient care to local unit management appraisal and development. Despite the municipal work's developmental strategy – 2015/2020, several training and workshop programs were held. However, this exertion relies mainly on external donations. The grants are neither durable nor stable and depended mainly on the donors' directions and interests.

The study results also discovered that the local government administration lacks interest in investing in its staff's competencies. Regrettably, the problem is widespread throughout the public segment due to the local leaders' lack of modest competencies, interest, or expertise amongst local management staff. The study analysis results indicate that the capacity-building challenge has experienced the least five major issues facing local administration.

The discussions showed that the applicants' most important remedy was improving the local unit's capacity and admitting human proficiencies to the job competencies analysis. Local government leaders' actual practices indicate that recruitment and selections are not carried out according to the merit principles but based on the tribalism and favouritism factors. This can be established from the Municipalities' annual reports review, which indicated their obligation to stop the casual municipality appointments and transfer appointment powers to the Civil Service Bureau.

The study believes that these interventions represent an irrational reaction and rewards failure to support stumbling local units. The findings showed intense challenges, including the local units' inability to gather their returns. The interviewees disagreed with the proposal to enhance the efficiency of financial management to collect revenues. The study believes that the factor behind their differences in this proposed strategy is their recognition that this efficiency depends, primarily on their seriousness in this endeavour.

The outcomes of the study highlighted that local administration experience high magnitudes of responsiveness encounters. According to the respondents' answers, the reason for this is that local governments cannot respond to the citizens' needs and anxieties due to the shortage of financial resources. The reason behind this observation is that the local administration hampers

local units' work. Resident components are closely associated with several governmental agencies through which they provide local services to citizens. The respondents showed that the most crucial challenge facing local government in public participation was the lack of trust of citizens in their local councils. This leads to the citizens' reluctance to participate in the decisions and actions and of provincial assemblies.

In consultations with some respondents, they clarified that they paid the price of hostile citizens' perceptions due to some Mayors' behaviour prejudiced against a portion of the populace through limitations concerning resident services' discriminative provision. It's interesting that several local leaders still believe that they can know the local citizens' needs without consulting them. It seems that the leaders of local units are reluctant to hold public meetings because they are afraid of increasing citizens' demands, on the one hand, and the lack of financial resources to meet these demands from another.

The study outcome exhibited that local administration encounters high-level problems in ecological conservation efforts. The poor water organization in terms of distribution and quality schedule results from internal migration and refugees' pressure on such resources. The local administration suffers from a lack of operational ecological systems and the low nature of the public services' ecological values. What matters worse is the lack of a precise regulation to penalize wrongdoers, frail control, and awareness among local councils.

Recommendations

Local government as the closest to the people at the grassroots is expected to play significant roles in providing the social services. However, as a result of numerous factors enumerated above, local governments have been inhibited to effective and efficient social service delivery to grassroots. Consequently, the paper would highlight some measures that would improve social service delivery at the local government. These measures include;

1. Constitutional Reforms to allow for Total Autonomy of Local Government: Reforms are needed to free the third tier of government and increase the fiscal and spending autonomy of local governments and minimise the interference and control of state governments. To ensure responsive governance, local government executive must be elected by the people and not superimposed by the ruling party or state governor. Elections at specific intervals should be conducted into the local government.

2. Curtailing corruption in the local Administration: To stem corruption and embezzlement, all financial transaction of the council must be audited and publicized. There should be monitoring and evaluation unit aim at measuring efficiency and effectiveness to ensure accountability and transparency in local government administration, the civil society organizations should also monitor the performance of local government officials and report any found wanting to anti-corruption agent. The anti-corrupt agencies like the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) should intensify their efforts at tackling the problem of pervasive corruption in the local government system.

3. Capacity Building for Institutional and Human Resources: There should be capacity building for local councils to

take advantage of modern tools of local governance that are being developed world wide. This must combine the political and administrative cadre of the councils. Building institutional and system capacity that produces the human capital that is committed to the principles of good governance briefly summarized as transparency, accountability, honesty, foresightedness, equity, justice, prudent management of public funds, strong leadership inspired by vision and direction that is beneficial to the masses. The capacity building programme should be two dimensional.

The first is institutional strengthening - with respect to the various organs, departments, units and relationships and operational matters. This should involve training and orientation in policy development, monitoring and evaluation, public participation, public service delivery, social mobilization and government collaboration with the private sector. The other dimension is human resources upgrading - including training and education of staff to enhance their knowledge, skills and competencies. The working environment should be upgraded to attract higher quality well motivated staff.

4. The role of leadership: Administration is assuming pivotal job toward the achievement of the arrangement of local government organization specifically and the nation as a rule. The issue with local government framework is absence of positive initiative. There is the urgent need to bring about political and administrative leadership that will serve as sources of accountability, the rule of law, administrative probity and good governance.

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