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CITY PROFILE OF SEBHA, LIBYA

October 2018

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The content of this report was developed by Mr. Samir Aita. The thematic maps were prepared by Mr. Jerbi Achraf with the support of Mr. Dario Ingiusto. Data and quality verification was provided by Ms. Asma Charfeddine. The UN Habitat and UNFPA teams would like to warmly thank Jazour Municipality teams for participating in Jazour profiling consultation workshops and for their valuable contributions. They also wish to acknowledge the generous support of the Bureau of Statistics and Census and the Urban Planning Agency teams.

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This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, KEY FINDINGS and RECOMMENDATIONS

The Rapid City Profiling and Monitoring System

With the support of the European Union, UN-Habitat and UNFPA had undertaken the realization of the Rapid City Profiling and Monitoring System (RCPMS) for six Libyan municipalities in close collaboration with the Libyan Ministry of Planning and the concerned municipalities, the Libyan Bureau of Statistics and Census (BSC) and the Urban Planning Agency (UPA).

This report is the RCPMS for the municipality of Sebha, an important city in the South of the country. It aims at establishing a first comprehensive Urban Information Analysis and Monitoring Framework (UIAMF) based on a detailed assessment of urban structures and facilities as well as on urban indicators related to basic services, local economy, living standards and their perceptions by inhabitants. It considers the outcomes of sectors' assessments conducted by key informants in Libya, the results of damage assessment conducted by the ground verification team in the targeted cities, as well as analysis and information provided by UN agencies and NGOs.

The City Profiling exercise informs on humanitarian, early recovery and stabilization responses and the prioritization of urban rehabilitation interventions so that they have the largest impact to encourage urban

recovery, in terms of location (spatial prioritization), sequencing, and types of interventions; and the return of displaced populations. It helps also building the capacity of local actors to evaluate and monitor the impact of the crisis on the urban functionality and services, considering the demographic changes because of the dynamic of the conflict and forced displacements.

UN-Habitat has utilized the latest high-resolution satellite imagery. The maps that were generated using GIS technology offer an evidence-based, multi-sector response planning framework and will be made available in the open data portal which will offer live up-to-date GIS mapping data whereby the concerned users can extract maps, tables, graphs and narrative reports. The urban functionality and damage assessment, led by UN-Habitat, was complemented by the results of the household survey - Multi-Sectoral Need Assessment (MSNA) - performed by the BSC and UNFPA, conducted in early 2018, which provides information on realities and perceptions of the life and service provisions of and to Sebha's population.

Executive Summary and key findings

Sebha is the key and the most populated city in Fezzan, the South of Libya, and the main gateway between North and South. In 2018, it estimatly hosts around 210,000 inhabitants constituting around 2/3rd of its governorate.

It has experienced fighting and damage, especially in 2011 and 2014. Most of the displaced were within the boundaries of the city and its immediate neighborhoods, accelerating the development of its informal settlements.

15,190 IDPs from Sebha outside the region has returned, constituting today 7% of the population. This is while there are still 8,390 displaced IDPs.

Sebha became also a major step on the migration road from Africa to the North. 35,040 migrants were accounted for in August 2018 (18% of the municipality population), in an accelerating trend. 89% of the migrants are from Africa, mainly Niger and Nigeria. Their humanitarian situation is a priority issue.

The municipality has 12 districts: Sebha City Center, Al Manshiya, Sakra, Al Jadid, Abdul Kafi, Al Mahdiya, Al Qardha, Al Thanawiya, Al Qahira, Al Nasiriya, Hijara and Tahrir. The most densely populated are Al Manshiya and Sakra.

The key findings of the RCPMS of Sebha municipality could be summarized on two levels:

General Environment

- **There is an issue in Sebha of citizenship and rights for different communities, like in most cities in the south. This issue should be addressed in priority to insure social peace.**
- Sebha was characterized by its important agricultural sector and by its role as a trade and

logistics step towards the south. **The dependence on government salaries was much less than in other parts of the country. The deterioration of agriculture and trade hardly affect its population living**, especially as they receive little aid. It also encourages the development of the informal economy.

- Despite the presence of many banks and the limitations of the Central Bank, **the economy in Sebha is cash-based**, much more than the other cities studied in the RCPMS exercise. This could be linked with the large development of informal economy.
- There is in Sebha an issue of reintegration of combatants, like in all other parts of the country. The weak economic activity and employment in the city constitute a major challenge to be addressed.

Multisector needs assessment

Governance

- Despite the promulgation of Law 59 of 2012, **Libyan municipalities had no clear functions and funding**, and their relations with the central administration and that of the mohafazat – the latter still have no elected councils - need to evolve according to the law and to be specified by rules. The investment needed for recovery necessitates a proper solution of these governance issues, particularly for what concerns budgeting,

public contracting and procurement. The municipal staff needs institutional support in **managerial capacity-building** for that purpose.

- The **public governance in Sebha need to be strengthened owing the major challenges posed** by the current situation.

Urban planning, land use and housing

- The municipality of Sebha hosts in 2018 around **53,000 housing units**; the largest majority are ground floor structures.
- In addition to the development of **informal settlements** within the boundaries of the municipality, another 5,700 Housing units had been informally built in the surroundings, constituting 11% of the total.
- **The realization of a new master plan for the urban development of the city appears to be a priority**, to deal with informal settlements, strengthen the urban character of the city and to promote social integration, considering local specificities. This include a housing, land and property (HLP) assessment owing the large share of informal settlements and the current stopping of property registration.
-

Destructions and damage

- The destruction of residential structures in Sebha are relatively limited.

Health

- The medical facilities in Sebha are operational. However, they suffer from a chronic **lack of staff and of specialties**.
- In addition, the population has significant problems to provide **medicines; they are rare and at high prices**. Both issues need to be addressed in priority.

Education

- The schools in Sebha are operational. However, the rate of school enrollment needs to be increased dealing mainly with the living conditions and attraction of irregular activities.
- The faculties and vocational training institutes are operational. 1 faculty compound was non-completed and destroyed during the events.
- There is no public child care center in Sebha, and the need is to be assessed.
- **Addressing the issue of education seems a priority to foster social integration and to combat irregular activities.**

Water, sewage and waste

- **There is a major problem of provision of drinking water in Sebha, needing to be assessed and addressed in priority.** 80% of households do not get the water from the network.

- The sewage network needs to be developed to the service all districts in the municipality.
- The waste collection is well organized in only some central districts. The **collection and dumping of waste seem to be major issues for most of districts**. Piles of waste accumulate, and private collection is organized. In addition, the only dumping site is now close to the - although informal settlements – it needs to be closed and removed.
- The main heritage site is that of the castle, destroyed during the fighting. It needs to be reconstructed.

Electricity and energy

- The availability of electricity in Sebha seems almost normal now, with only around 3 hours of outages.
- The development of renewable energies needs to be fostered, as in Ubari.
- There is also a low availability of cooking gas, the prices of which are high in the city.
- Also, **the street lighting is not functioning in most districts, needing the damage to be repaired. This issue appears also to be a priority to enhance safety.**

The Roads, transportation and telecommunications

- No major issue besides normal maintenance has been identified.

Heritage and culture

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CONTEXT

1. CONTEXT

Sebha in Libya Environment

Sebha is the center and gateway city of the South Fezzan region of Libya, the biggest municipality in this South and the capital of the governorate of the same name (map 1).

Situated at the edge of the “*Idehan Ubari*”¹ desert, it constitutes the cross road towards Ubari and Ghat in the South West, and towards the South to Murzuq at the northern edge of “*Idehan Murzuq*” desert and to Umm Al Araneb and Al Gatroun at the southern edge, where a desert route takes to Al Kufra in the South East (1,877 km). 2 northern roads cross in Sebha, one from Tripoli through Gharyan and Brak, and one from Sirte through Al Jufra.

The deserts take mostly the shape of flat sand dunes (erg, ‘*arq*’ in Arabic). That of Ubari contains however many oases and lakes, including the large oasis of Gabroun (*Qabr ‘Aoun* in Arabic, the grave of ‘Aoun) and its big salty lake, a touristic hub, and many others smaller (*Mandara Umm Al Maq’* – the mother of

Tarhouna, etc.). All these lakes were part of a huge megafazzan lake which started to disappear 7,000 years ago².

Sebha is in fact situated above the Nubian Sandstone Aquifer system (NSAS), the biggest fossil freshwater reservoir in the world, estimated at 373,000 billion cubic meters, covering some 2 million square kilometers. This NSAS lies under the Sahara Desert (500 m deep), underneath the territorial lands of Libya, Chad, Egypt and Sudan. One major branch of Libya’s Great Man-Made River (GMMR) was developed since the 1980’s in the area, with most of the wells in Jebel Hassawnah (named after an Arab tribe), north of Sebha. It provides more than 44% of the total of around 4 billion cubic meters transported yearly³ to feed the needs of the coastal area of the country (map 2).

Sebha is a historical caravan route to and from Africa, running along a chain of volcanic mountains. At the East of the city, the Haruj Al Aswad mountain culminates at 1,200m.

Long before the recent development, Sebha and Wadi Al Hayat preserve a history going back to the pharaonic

with old Egypt, giving two dynasties of pharaohs from a Libyan Meshwesh origin⁴ (1295-1075 BC). It was followed by the Libu (giving Libya its current name) known to the Greeks of Cyrenaica and to Ramses II, III and Merneptah⁵. The Garamantes city-states (mentioned by Herodotus and Pliny the Elder)⁶ ruled Libya Southwest later (500 BC-700 AD), having their main city in Jerma. They developed irrigation networks (*faggara*) and built **tomb pyramids**⁷.

No oil fields exist near Sebha. Most of them are located 200km to the South West near Ubari.

The city of Sebha and its regional network

The governorate of Sebha is bordered by Al-Jufra from the east, Ubari from the west, “Wadi Al Shati” (the valley of the coast) from the north and Murzuq from the south.

The road from Brak to Sebha (82 km) passes through Ubari desert, making Tripoli at 770 km; that coming from Al Jufra continues along the volcanic plateau, making the travel from Sirte of 622 km. Ubari is at 197 km along the mountain chains and Murzuq at 150 km

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