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CITY PROFILE OF UBARI, LIBYA

October 2018

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, KEY FINDINGS and RECOMMENDATIONS

The Rapid City Profiling and Monitoring System- Ubari

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 cities 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 presents the City Profile of Ubari, an important city in the South of the country. It aims at establishing a first comprehensive Urban Information Analysis 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 informant interviews conducted in with the different sectors in the City, the results of damage assessment conducted by the ground verification team in Ubari and build on assessments undertaken 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 UNFPA in close collaboration with the Libyan Bureau of Statistics and Census, conducted in mid-2018, which provides information on realities and perceptions of the life and service provisions of and to Ubari's population.

Executive Summary and key findings

The economic activity of Ubari is largely based on agriculture and trade. The city is located in the South of Libya (Fezzan) on the road from Sebha to Ghat. In 2018, it hosts around 47,000 inhabitants constituting

the 30% of Wadi Al Hayat population. Its central area (Ubari city) had experienced damage due to shelling during the conflict, destroying its trade and small industrial activities. **Around 75% of its population have been displaced during its internal conflict, mainly between 2014 and 2016. They have mostly returned.** Ubari is also on the **road of migration** from Africa towards the North. However, **the migrant population accounted for in 2018, mostly from Africa, are less than those before the conflict.**

The municipality has 4 districts: Ubari Center, Dissa, Mashru' and Hattia. Ubari center has most an urban character and a mixed population, while the others are mainly agricultural-residential with even tribal huts reflecting the nomadic character of part of the population.

The key findings of Ubari City Profile could be summarized at two levels:

General Environment

- The districts of Ubari Center and of Mashru' are the most populated.
- The collapse of trade sector and small industrial shops and the decline of agriculture resulted in a decrease of population income. This is specially that the share of public sector employees is less than Libya average and that the prices in Ubari are very high, even for agriculture products.
- **Access to cash is also a major issue in Ubari,** much more than in other Libyan cities.

- **All this encouraged the development of illegal activities** (smuggling of migrants, alcohol, drugs, illegal exploitation of gold, armed groups disrupting oil & gas exploitation or development projects;).
- Thus, **the issues of dismantling of armed groups, of their reintegration in the economic and social life, and of solving social and nationality claims are of utmost priority.**

Multisector needs assessment

Urban planning, land use and housing

- The municipality of Ubari hosts in 2018 around **7,000 housing units**; the largest majority are ground floor structures.
- A new master plan for the urban development of the city need to be established in order to strengthen the urban character of the city and to promote social integration, taking into account 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 Ubari are relatively limited. It is mostly the trading and

small industrial workshops in the Center of Ubari which has suffered.

Health

- **The medical facilities in Ubari were initially weak and suffered greatly from the conflict. There is chronic lack of staff and of specialties.**
- In addition, the population has significant problems to provide medicines; they are rare and at high prices.

Education

- There is an issue in basic schooling, especially in the Mashru' district where less than 80% of children are attending.
- The situation of the faculties and vocational training institutes is unclear, but probably weak.
- **Addressing the issue of education is a priority to foster social integration.**

Water, sewage and waste

- The drinking water network and the water tanks need maintenance.
- However, the proper management of the water resources is a major issue, owing the lowering of the level of the underground water and potential pollution.
- Only Ubari center and Hattia districts are connected to the sewage network. **The**

sewage network needs to be developed to the other districts and maintained.

- **The collection and dumping of waste seem to be a major issue in Ubari municipality, needing to be organized.**

Electricity and energy

- **The low availability of electricity from the public network seems also to be a major issue** in the municipality.
- The **640MW power plant** under construction is almost complete. However, the work had been stopped due to the security situation. Its completion and connection to the gas fields is also a priority.
- Also, the development of renewable energies forecasted in the 3rd master plan need to be launched.
- 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, needing the damage to be repaired.

Heritage and culture

- Ubari has a rich archeological heritage (pyramids, etc.) and a beautiful scenery (the desert lakes, the mountains) which allow it to be **a major touristic destination**, if security is restored.

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CONTEXT

1. CONTEXT

Ubari in Libya Environment

Ubari is a small Libyan city situated in the governorate of “Wadi Al Hayat” (the valley of life), in the South Fezzan region. It is on the border of a major desert area: “IdehanUbari”¹, named in Berber language after the city.

The desert takes mostly the shape of flat sand dunes (erg, ‘arq in Arabic), containing 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 Maa’* – the mother of water-, *Umm Al Hissan* -the mother of the horse-, *At-Tarhouna*, etc.). All these lakes were part of a huge megafazzan lake which started to disappear 7,000 years ago².

Ubari is a main step on the desert route taking from Sebha towards Niger and the South of Algeria (through Al ‘Aouynat, Ghat and Al Birkah); a historical caravan route to and from Africa, running along a chain of



volcanic mountains, mostly practiced by the Tuareg. On the other side of the mountains, a second major dunes’ desert develops, “IdehanMurzuq”, named after the city of Murzuq, a step in another old trade route to the Tibesti mountains and Tchad, mostly practiced by the Toubou (or Tedou) (see maps 2 and 3).

Ubari is also situated above the Nubian Sandstone Aquifer system (NSAS), the biggest fossil freshwater reservoir in the world, estimated at 373,000 billion cubic metres, 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 and Murzuq. 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).

¹ By T L Miles - Own work by uploader Derived from Blank mapImage: Africa_topography_map_with_borders.png, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4438190>

² https://www.temehu.com/Cities_sites/Gabroun.htm

³

http://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/aquastat/pdf_files/LBY_tables.pdf

Besides the agricultural lands East of the city, two major agricultural projects had been developed with the underground water near Ubari: the Maknoussa



and Barjoj projects. In 2009, they used to produce respectively 13,194 and 5,582 tons of wheat, 1,447 and 1724 tons of barley⁴. The production had dropped significantly in 2011⁵.

Large oil fields were discovered near Ubari, including *Al Sharara* (the spark) and *Al Feel* (the elephant) fields. *Al Sharara* (55 km West of Ubari) was discovered in 1980 by the Romanian company Petrom, but is operated by the Spanish Borel with a production

Lasmo, the Italian ENI and AGIP, and the South Koreans Daesung, Daewoo, Hyundai, KPC and Majuko. The field is jointly operated by the Libyan National Oil Company (NOC) and AGIP. It uses to produce around 125,000 bpd before 2011, with 700 million barrels of reserves (see map 3).

Long before the recent development, Ubari and Wadi Al Hayat preserve a history going back to the pharaonic period. Little is known on an ancient civilization which controlled the area up to Siwa oasis and interacting with old Egypt, giving two dynasties of pharaohs from a Libyan Meshweshorigin⁶ (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 Merneptah⁷. The Garamantes city-states (mentioned by Herodotus and Pliny the Elder)⁸ ruled Libya Southwest later (500 BC-700 AD), having

⁶<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meshwesh> and Dodson, Aidan Mark. 1995. "Rise & Fall of The House of Shoshenq: The Libyan Centuries of Egyptian History." KMT: A Modern

their main city in Jerma.

They developed irrigation networks (*foggara*) and built **tumbpyramids**⁹.

The city of Ubari and its regional network

The road from Ubari to Sebha(197 km) in the North-East goes along the volcanic chain and crosses the small cities of Al Ghayfah, Jerma, Twash, Brik, Al Fakhfakha, Al Kharaneq, Garagra, Takarkiba, Al Fujeij, Laroko, Qabr 'Aoun, Al Raqiba, Al Tanahma, BintByah, Qasr Khulayf, etc. These small cities developed around small agricultural exploitations. A road junction near to Sebha allows to cross the mountain South to Murzuq (169 km away).

The road towards the South-West is much more desertic with almost no cities or villages before reaching Al 'Awinat and Ghat(372 km away) on the



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