



World Bank



Municipality of Greater
Amman



Arab Urban Development
Institute

“Children and the City” Conference

Amman, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan,
11–13 December 2002, 7–9 Shawal 1423H

Amman Declaration on “Children and the city”

Under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah, the ‘Children and the City’ Conference was convened in Amman, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, during the period from 7-9th Shawal 1423 H, 11-13th December 2002. It was jointly organized by the Arab Urban Development Institute (the scientific and technical arm of the Arab Towns Organization), the Municipality of Greater Amman, and the World Bank, in collaboration with UNICEF, UNESCO, and UNFPA. The Conference objectives are awareness raising regarding the constraints and problems facing children in urban areas, recommending suitable solutions, learning from successful experiences of cities and organizations, as well as strengthening the relationships among concerned parties and organizations. Participants included 40 mayors, municipality heads, governors and municipal leaders in Arab cities; 10 secretaries of national councils of childhood and family in the Arab World; 170 researchers, World Bank executives and staff, representatives of international organizations and other agencies concerned with childhood issues in 30 Arab and sister countries, as well as some children and youth.

The participants agreed to adopt, as a slogan for the conference, Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah’s quotation:

**“To achieve a qualitative leap in our societies, we should invest
in our children”**

Based on a deep concern with the future of our children, and our responsibility to provide them with a well-balanced nurturing environment, and to improve their standard of living; and as the participants are well aware that children are the future leaders, and that paying attention to children and their designated services is a very important investment of every society, and in conformity with all child-related international conventions and treaties, the participating mayors and municipal leaders, in collaboration with their partners in the concerned public agencies, civil society associations, international organizations and researchers are keen to make Arab cities well suited for raising and nurturing children, providing a safe and decent living for all children regardless of their gender, social or religious backgrounds, and to involve them in decision making concerning their urban needs. Municipalities, their partners and other concerned parties shall develop the required mechanisms to implement this Declaration.

The participants recommend the following:

- Reaffirm the rights of all children, and Palestinian and Iraqi children in particular, to a peaceful existence and protection from all forms of violations that hinder their physical, social and psychological development.
- Develop and support programs and initiatives that reinforce local identities, and counter the negative impacts of cultural alienation.
- Strive to make sure that the interests of children are among the top priorities on which municipal policies, programs, and development plans are based, and that childhood services and programs receive their fair share in municipal recourses.
- Municipalities and cities should strive to influence legislations and official decisions in favor of children.
- Enact appropriate actions to ensure that the family, as the primary institution that cares for children's rights and needs, continues to practice its nurturing role. This includes implementing programs that support poor families, and to ease the economic and psychological pressures that lead to family break down and the attendant child vagrancy. Suggested mechanism to do so include:
 - A. Making sure that families have access to adequate shelter and basic needs according to their needs.
 - B. Generating employment opportunities for poor families through projects implemented by municipalities, and accrediting craftsmen and small entrepreneurs as suppliers of building materials and components, and as skilled manpower in such projects.
- Create appropriate mechanisms for involving children and youth in local planning, decision-making and implementation of municipal programs, particularly those that most affect their lives.
- Develop and implement urban planning principles and building by-laws aiming at protecting children from accidents and crimes. Special attention shall be paid to facilitate the mobility of all children, specially those with special needs, and to ensure their safe accessibility to public facilities, and their participation in all civic activities.
- Develop and implement projects that foster the mental and physical abilities of children – such as parks, playgrounds, public libraries, cultural and recreational centers.
- Initiate and support projects that aim at providing protection and care to all children, particularly those with special needs, street children, refugee and displaced children. Such efforts should be coordinated with concerned authorities, civil society organizations, and international organizations to ensure the reintegration of those children within their communities.

- Pay special attention to early-childhood development institutions, and to develop effective mechanisms to ensure their provision of quality services.
- Play an active role in awareness-raising campaigns – particularly health, environmental, social and educational campaigns.
- Develop a database of the needs and conditions of children encompassing various socio-economic indicators to be the scientific base for local planning, and to establish a mechanism for regular monitoring and evaluation of children's needs and conditions.
- Provide adequate training to workers in the field of childhood; and to provide cities and municipalities with competent staff dedicated to children's rights and needs, and to delegate to them sufficient powers.
- Strengthen the partnership among all those concerned with child development: public and national bodies, the private sector, NGOs and international organizations, and initiate mechanisms to exchange expertise and successful experiences.
- Cities and municipalities should prepare detailed action plans taking into consideration local priorities, circumstances and material and human resources; and to strive to overcome financial and administrative obstacles and inadequate knowledge that hinder their implementation, and to cooperate in this respect with donor countries, regional and international funding institutions.
- Establish an award for cities and municipalities that implement successful and innovative initiatives in the field of children's programs and projects, and follow these with workshops to review best practices.
- The organizers of this conference will establish a suitable mechanism for regular follow-up and evaluation of performance in the above-mentioned fields, and to set a timetable for doing so.
- Establish a regional fund for financing municipal projects related to children, and to collaborate in this regard with donor countries and international organizations.

Finally, the participants express their deepest gratitude to Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah for her kind patronage of the conference, and to Greater Amman Municipality for their kind hospitality.

Allah is the grantor of success.

Amman, 13th December 2002