



HOUSING AND LAND RIGHTS NETWORK

Habitat International Coalition

Report of fourth “Sanctuary in the City: Beirut” Workshop Beirut, 22–24 May 2017

On 22–24 May 2017, HIC-HLRN and Amel Association organized the 4th and last round of the Right to the City workshop with the refugee community and conducted interviews with specialized Lebanese NGOs on the first draft of the Beirut Right to the City Charter.

The last round of the workshops focused on reviewing the draft of the Beirut Charter and sharing it with the refugee community to be sure that their priorities, recommendations and comments from the previous workshops were properly reflected.

The two days of the 4th workshop included an explanation to the structure and normative framework of the Beirut Charter (principles – challenges – recommendations). The principles cover several key elements and concepts, as follows:

- Human rights;
- Spatial justice;
- Non-discrimination;
- Gender equality;
- Equity;
- Participation/ Citizenship;
- Empower marginalized and vulnerable communities;
- International cooperation.

While the challenges and recommendations reflected two principal dimensions: livelihood and social cohesion.

The third day involved HLRN officers conducting interviews with Lebanese NGOs interested and specialized in “urban justice,” housing rights, rights of persons with disability. HLRN conducted the interviews with five NGOs based in Beirut (Public Works Studio, Jihad al-Binaa, Legal Agenda, Justice and Mercy Association, and the Lebanese National Association for the Rights of Persons with Disability), sharing and discussing with them the articles of the draft Beirut Charter, in order to ensure that no priority issues were missing or needed adjustment.

Two of the Lebanese organizations (Public Works Studio and Legal Agenda) that HLRN met were intensely interested in the Beirut Charter and the concept of the Right to the City (R2C), in general. They welcomed involve in any planned follow-up and mechanism to apply the Beirut Charter and develop R2C with the Lebanese Order of Engineers & Architects and members of the Lebanese Parliament.

Through all three days of the workshops and consultations, HLRN was unable to meet as planned with municipalities/local authorities. They apologized for having available time during the three days, despite efforts of the local partners at Amel. However, the recommendations during the workshop with the refugees and the interviews with the civil society raised priority issues for consideration related to the responsibility of the Lebanese municipalities as follows:

- The need to improve coordination and cooperation among municipalities;
- The potential development of a local mechanism to promote greater transparency, responsibility, accountability, participation and responsiveness of local governance;
- Needed long-term strategic planning with local priorities;
- Developing and strengthening participatory mechanisms with inhabitants and civil society organizations;
- Monitoring and assessment of policies and practices in light of human rights principles;
- Improving population data gathering and analysis.

Also, two recommendations for the future steps, including developing the set of R2C principles and priorities into a civic plan to support local action and coordination with municipalities/local authorities and to attract international partners for cooperation and assistance.